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THE

CONQUEST OF FLORIDA,

BY

HERNANDO DE SOTO.

BY

THEODORE IRVING, M.A.

Son quattromila, e bene armati e bene
Instrutti, usi al disagio e tolleranti.
Buona è la gente, e non può da più dotta
O da più forte guida esser condotta.—TASSO.

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DEDICATION.

TO WASHINGTON IRVING, Esq.

My Dear Uncle:

I know of no person to whom I can with more propriety dedicate the following pages than to yourself, since they were written at your suggestion, and the materials of which they are composed were moulded into their present form and feature under your affectionate and judicious advice.

Often, in the course of my labors, when I have been dismayed by unlooked for difficulties, and disheartened by those misgivings which beset an inexperienced writer, you have dispelled my doubts, cheered forward my faltering spirit, and encouraged me to persevere.

I would be pardoned for alluding to other and greater obligations yet nearer to my heart: with the anxious interest of a parent's eye, you have watched over the most critical period of my life. Amid the excitement and snares of foreign scenes, and in the quiet employments of our home, your counsels have been my guide—your friendship—the circumstances will excuse the term from one so much your junior—your friendship my happiness and pride. The heedlessness of boyhood could not arrest your assiduous care—the wayward habits of youth have not wearied your unceasing solicitude. That I have been thus far led in safety, claims the fervent gratitude of

Your affectionate nephew,

THEODORE IRVING.

PREFACE.

WHILE studying the Spanish language, some few years since, at Madrid, an old chronicle was placed in my hands, relating to the early discoveries and achievements of the Spaniards in America. It was denominated "The Florida of the Inca, or the History of the Adelantado, Hernando de Soto, Governor and Captain-General of the Kingdom of Florida, and of other heroic cavaliers, Spaniards and Indians: written by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega." As I read, I became insensibly engrossed by the extraordinary enterprise therein narrated: I dwelt with intense interest upon the harebrained adventures and daring exploits of steel-clad warriors, and the no less valiant and chivalrous deeds of savage chieftains, which entitle this narrative to the high praise bestowed upon it by Mr. Southey, of being one of the most delightful works in the Spanish language.

While thus employed, I had the good fortune to meet with a narrative on the same subject, written by a Portuguese soldier, who was present in the expedition. This led to further research and closer examination; and, finding that the striking events and perilous adventures in the chronicles of the Inca were borne

out, in the main, by this narrative from another hand, and that various lights had been thrown by modern travellers upon the line of march said to have been taken by the adventurous band of De Soto, I was convinced, that what I had before regarded almost as a work of fiction, was an authentic, though, perhaps, occasionally exaggerated history.

Deeming, therefore, that a full account of an expedition which throws such an air of romance over the early history of a portion of our country, would possess interest in the eyes of my countrymen, I resolved, to the best of my abilities, to digest a work from the materials before me.

The two main sources from which I have derived my facts, are the narratives already mentioned, by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and by the anonymous Portuguese adventurer. The former I have consulted in a folio edition, printed in Madrid, in 1723, and in the history of the Indias, by Herrera, in which it is incorporated almost at full length. The Portuguese narrative I have found in an English translation, published in London, in 1686, and in an abridgment in Purchas's Pilgrims.

It has been the fashion, in later days, to distrust the narrative of the Inca, and to put more faith in that of the Portuguese. This has occasionally been done without due examination into their respective claims to credibility. Garcilaso de la Vega was a man of rank and honor. He was descended from an ancient Spanish stock by the father's side, while by the mother's, he was of the lofty Peruvian line of the Incas. His narrative was originally taken down by himself, from the lips of a friend; a cavalier of worth and respectability, who had been an officer under De Soto, and for whose probity we have the word of the Inca as a guarantee. It was authenticated and enriched by the writ-

ten journals or memorandums of two other soldiers, who had served in the expedition. He had the testimony, therefore, of three eye-witnesses.

The Portuguese narrative, on the other hand, is the evidence of merely a single eye-witness, who gives himself out as a cavalier, or gentleman; but for this we have merely his own word, and he is anonymous. There is nothing intrinsic in his work that should entitle it to the exclusive belief that has been claimed for it. It agrees with the narrative of the Inca, as to the leading facts which form the framework of the story: it differs from it occasionally, as to the plans and views of Hernando de Soto; but here the Inca is most to be depended upon—the Spanish cavalier from whom he derived his principal information being more likely to be admitted to the intimate councils of his commander than one of a different nation, and being free from the tinge of national jealousy which may have influenced the statements of the Portuguese.

The narrative of the Portuguese is more meagre and concise than that of Garcilaso; omitting a thousand interesting anecdotes and personal adventures; but this does not increase its credibility. A multitude of facts, gathered and gleaned from three different persons, may easily have escaped the knowledge, or failed to excite the attention of a solitary individual. These anecdotes are not the less credible because they were striking and extraordinary; the whole expedition was daring and extravagant, and those concerned in it men who delighted in adventure and exploit.*

I have been induced, therefore, in the following pages, to

* The reader will find a note concerning Garcilaso de la Vega and his work, in the Appendix.

draw my facts more freely and copiously than others, in later days, have seemed inclined to do, from the work of the Inca; still I have scrupulously and diligently collated the two narratives, endeavoring to reconcile them where they disagreed, and to ascertain, with strict impartiality, which was most likely to be correct, where they materially varied, and to throw upon the whole subject the scattered lights furnished by various modern investigators. While I have discarded many incidents which appeared hyperbolical, or which savored too strongly of the gossip of idle soldiery, I have retained, as much as possible, those every-day and familiar anecdotes which give so lively a picture of the characters, habits, persons and manners of the Spanish discoverers of those days, and to my mind bear so strongly the impress of truth and nature. My great object has been to present a clear, connected, and characteristic narrative of this singular expedition: how far I have succeeded, it is for the public to judge.

PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION.

Since publishing the last edition of the Conquest of Florida, much valuable light has been thrown upon the expedition by the investigation of several literary gentlemen residing in our Southern States, and I have been gratified to find, that their statements corroborate, in the main, the account I have given of De Soto's expedition.

I am indebted to G. R. Fairbanks, Esq., of St. Augustine, for the results of a very careful personal examination of the route of the Spaniards until they reached Apalachee Bay, and have been much aided, by a diagram with which he very kindly furnished me, in tracing the line of march through East Florida.

Buckingham Smith, Esq., very politely forwarded me from Washington, the most recent maps of East Florida, and gave me some useful hints with reference to the route of De Soto.

A valuable article, entitled "Sketches of the History of Alabama," by Alexander Meek, Esq., published in the "Southron Monthly Magazine and Review," Jan., 1839, confirms the general accuracy of my work in regard to localities.

Col. Albert J. Pickett, a young author of reputation, at the South, has issued in pamphlet form the first chapter of a History of Alabama he is preparing for the press, and which promises to be a valuable addition to the historical literature of our country.* This chapter is taken up with the Expedition of De Soto, and has been written, as he says, "while armed at all points with the best traditions and authorities." As I have differed from some writers on certain points, it is gratifying to meet the following remark in Mr. Pickett's preface. "Theodore Irving, in his Conquest of Florida, has in a great measure been accurate and faithful in describing the route of De Soto, and the incidents attending it."

A third account of this expedition, written by *Biedma*, De Soto's commissary, was placed in my hands by Joseph G. Gogswell, Esq., the accomplished and courteous librarian of the Astor Library. It is a confused statement of an illiterate soldier, who, although an eye-witness of what he relates, had not the gift of describing lucidly what he saw, but, so far as his narrative throws any light on the subject, the accuracy of History, as here given, is confirmed.

* "The History of Alabama, and incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi," by Albert James Pickett, of Montgomery, Ala., 2 vols.

The growing interest manifested in our country for every thing that tends to clear up the misty annals of our early history, has induced me to prepare a revised edition of my work for the press; and if it only serves this purpose, I shall be fully rewarded for my labors.

Since the publication of the first edition of this work, the war with the native tribes of Florida has occurred; in which the United States troops have sustained many of the difficulties, hardships and perils sustained by the Spaniards in their adventurous expedition. The same proud and unyielding spirit was exhibited by the native chiefs, which actuated their ancestors, and called forth the admiration of the Spanish historians. Indeed, the recent Indian campaigns in Florida cast back much illustration and interest on the romantic enterprise of De Soto.

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CONQUEST OF FLORIDA.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST DISCOVERY OF FLORIDA.

NEVER was the spirit of wild adventure more universally diffused than at the dawn of the sixteenth century. The wondrous discoveries of Columbus and his hardy companions and followers, the descriptions of the beautiful summer isles of the west, and the tales of unexplored regions of wealth locked up in unbounded wildernesses, had an effect upon the imaginations of the young and the adventurous, not unlike the preaching of the chivalric crusades for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. The gallant knight, the servile retainer, the soldier of fortune, the hooded friar, the painstaking mechanic, the toilful husbandman, the loose profligate, and the hardy mariner, all were touched with the pervading passion, all left home, country, friends, wives, children, loves, to seek some imaginary Eldorado, confidently expecting to return with countless treasure.

Of all the enterprises undertaken in this spirit of daring adventure, none has surpassed for hardihood and variety of incident

that of the renowned Hernando de Soto and his band of cavaliers. It was poetry put in action; it was the knight-errantry of the old world carried into the depths of the American wilderness; indeed, the personal adventures, the feats of individual prowess, the picturesque descriptions of steel-clad cavaliers, with lance and helm and prancing steed, glittering through the wildernesses of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and the prairies of the Far West, would seem to us mere fictions of romance, did they not come to us recorded in matter of fact narratives of contemporaries, and corroborated by minute and daily memoranda of eye-witnesses.

Before we enter, however, upon the stirring and eventful story of the fortunes of De Soto and his followers, it is proper to notice briefly the discovery of the land which was the scene of his adventures, and the various expeditions to it which stimulated him to his great enterprise.

Those who are conversant with the history of the Spanish discoveries will remember the chimerical cruise of the brave old governor of Porto Rico, Ponce de Leon, in search of the Fountain of Youth. This fabled fountain, according to Indian tradition, existed in one of the Bahama Islands. Ponce de Leon sought after it in vain, but in the course of his cruisings discovered a country of vast and unknown extent, to which, from the abundance of flowers, and from its being first seen on Palm Sunday (Pascua Florida), he gave the name of Florida.

Obtaining permission from the Spanish government to subjugate and govern this country, he made a second voyage to its shores, but was mortally wounded in a conflict with the natives. Such was the fate of the first adventurer into the wild regions of Florida, and he really seems to have bequeathed his ill fortune to his successors.

A few years after his defeat a captain of a caravel, named Diego Miruelo, was driven to the coast of Florida by stress of weather, where he obtained a small quantity of silver and gold in traffic from the natives. With this he returned well pleased to San Domingo, spreading the fame of the country he had visited. About the same time a company of seven wealthy men of San Domingo, concerned in gold mines, at the head of which was the licentiate Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, auditor and judge of appeals of that island, fitted out two vessels to cruise among the islands and entrap Indians to work in the mines. In the course of this righteous cruise the vessels were driven by stress of weather to a cape on the east coast, to which they gave the name of St. Helena. The country in the neighborhood was called Chicorea, and is the same now called South Carolina. Here they anchored at the mouth of a river which they called the Jordan, after the name of the sea-captain who discovered it. It is the same now known by its Indian appellation, the Cambahee.* The natives hastened to the shores at sight of the ships, which they mistook for huge sea-monsters; but, when they beheld men issue from them, with white complexions and beards, and clad in raiment and shining armor, they fled in terror.

The Spaniards soon dispelled their fears, and a friendly intercourse took place. The poor Indians were kind and hospitable, brought provisions to the ships, and made the strangers presents of marten skins, pearls, and a small quantity of gold and silver.

* We follow the general opinion, strengthened by the circumstance that the neighboring Sound and Island are still called by the name of St. Helena. Herrera places Cape St. Helena and the river Jordan in the thirty-second degree of latitude, which is that of Savannah river.—*Vide Herrera*, D. ii. lib. x. c. 6.

The Spaniards gave them trinkets in return, and, having completed their supplies of wood and water and provisions, invited their savage friends on board of the ships. The Indians eagerly accepted the invitation. They thronged the vessels, gazing with wonder at every thing around them; but when a sufficient number were below the decks, the Spaniards perfidiously closed the hatches upon them, and, weighing anchor, made sail for San Domingo. One of the ships was lost in the course of the voyage, the other arrived safe, but the Indians on board of her remained sullen and gloomy, and refused food, so that most of them perished of famine and melancholy.*

The reports, however, brought back by the kidnappers, of the country they had visited, as well as the specimens of gold and silver brought home about the same time by Diego Miruelo, roused the cupidity and ambition of the auditor Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon. Being shortly afterwards in Spain, he obtained from the Emperor Charles V. permission to conquer and govern the newly-discovered province of Chicorea. With this permission he returned to San Domingo, and fitted out an armament of three large vessels, embarking personally in the enterprise.

Diego Miruelo persuaded him first to steer in quest of the country he had visited, and which he represented as much richer than Chicorea. He accompanied the expedition as pilot, but having, with a negligence unworthy of a practised mariner, neglected in his first visit to take an observation, he was unable to find the place at which he had formerly landed, and was so much mortified by the ridicule and reproaches of his employers, that he fell into a profound melancholy, lost his senses, and died in the course of a few days.

* Hist. Florida, por el Inca, L. i. c. 2. Herrera, D. ii. L. x. c. 6.

Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon now prosecuted his voyage to the eastward in search of Chicorea. Arriving in the river Jordan (or Cambahee), the scene of perfidy in the preceding voyage, his principal ship stranded and was lost. With the remaining two he passed further to the eastward, and landed on a coast adjoining Chicorea, in a gentle and pleasant region. Here he was so well received that he considered the country already under his dominion, and permitted two hundred of his men to visit the principal village, about three leagues in the interior, while he remained with a small force to guard the ships.

The inhabitants of the village entertained these visitors with feasting and rejoicing for three days, until, having put them completely off their guard, they rose upon them in the night and massacred every soul. They then repaired by daybreak to the harbor, and surprised Vasquez de Ayllon and his handful of guards. The few who survived escaped wounded and dismayed to their ships, and making all sail from the fated coast, hastened back to San Domingo. According to some accounts Ayllon remained among the slain on the coast he sought to subjugate, but others assert that he returned wounded to San Domingo, where the humiliation of his defeat, and the ruin of his fortunes, conspired with his bodily ills to hurry him broken-hearted to the grave. Thus signally did the natives of Chicorea revenge the wrongs of their people who had been so perfidiously kidnapped.*

* Hist. Florida, por el Inca, L. i. c. 2. Herrera, D. ii. L. x. c. 6. Idem. D iii. lib. viii. c. 8. Peter Martyr, D. vii. c. 11. Heylyns Cosmographie, L. iv. p. 100. Lond. Ed. 1669.

CHAPTER II.

THE EXPEDITION OF PAMPHILO DE NARVAEZ.

A CAVALIER of greater note was the next who aspired to subjugate the unknown realms of Florida. This was the brave but ill-starred Pamphilo de Narvaez, the same who had attempted to arrest Hernando Cortes in his conquering career against Mexico, in which attempt he was defeated in battle, and lost an eye. Narvaez possessed favor at court, and was enabled to fit out a considerable armament for his new enterprise. He was invested by the Emperor Charles V. with the title of Adelantado, or military governor of the country, he expected to subdue and occupy, which was that part of Florida extending from its extreme cape to the river of Palms. In this expedition he trusted to wipe off the disgrace of his late defeat, and even to acquire laurels which might vie with those of Cortes.

On the 12th of April, 1528, Narvaez anchored at the mouth of an open bay on the eastern coast of Florida, with a squadron of four barks and a brigantine. Here he landed his forces, consisting of four hundred men and forty-five horses; having lost many of his men by desertion in the West India islands, and several of his horses in a storm.

Erecting the royal standard, he took possession of the country for the crown of Spain, with no opposition from the natives. After having explored the vicinity, Narvaez determined to penetrate the country in a northward direction, hoping to discover some great empire like that of Mexico or Peru. In the mean time, the ships were to proceed along the coast in quest of some convenient harbor, where they were either to await his arrival, or to steer for Havana and return with supplies for the army.*

This plan was strongly opposed by the treasurer of the expedition, one Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, a prudent and sagacious man. He represented the danger of plunging into an unknown wilderness without knowing a word of the language, and advised, rather, that they should continue on in their ships, until they found a secure harbor and a fertile country, from whence they might make incursions into the interior.

This sound advice was slighted by Narvaez and his adventurous companions, whose imaginations were inflamed with the idea of inland conquest. The squadron, accordingly, set sail to the northward; and Narvaez and his troops set out by land in the same direction, accompanied by the faithful Alvar Nuñez; who, since he could not dissuade his commander from his desperate career, resolved to share his fate.

The force which proceeded by land consisted of three hundred men, forty of whom were mounted on horses. The allowance to each man consisted of two pounds of biscuit and half a pound of bacon. For the first few days they met with fields of maize, and villages containing provisions. Here, however, they outraged the feelings of the natives by rifling and laying waste their sepulchres, mistaking them for idolatrous temples. They

* Herrera, Decad. iv. L. iv. c. 4.

afterwards journeyed many days through desert solitudes without house or inhabitant, suffering greatly from want of food. They crossed rapid rivers on rafts or by swimming, continually exposed to the assaults of hordes of lurking savages; they traversed swamps and forests, making their way with great difficulty through matted thickets and over fallen trees, and suffering every variety of misery and hardship.

Still they were cheered onward by the assurances of certain captives who served as guides, that at some distance ahead lay a vast province called Apalachee, extremely fertile, and abounding in the gold they so eagerly sought after.

At length they arrived in sight of the place which gave its name to this long desired province. Narvaez had pictured it to himself a second Mexico, and was chagrined at finding it a mere village of two hundred and forty houses. Alvar Nuñez was sent forward to take possession of it, which he did without opposition, the men having all fled to the woods.

The Spaniards remained twenty-five days in the village, exploring the neighboring country, and subsisting upon the provisions they found in the place. During this time they were harassed, day and night, by the natives of the province, who were an exceedingly warlike people. They were disappointed in their hopes of finding gold, and discouraged by the accounts given them of the country further on. They were told, however, that by shaping their course to the southward, towards the sea, they would, after nine days' journey, come to the village of Aute, where there was maize and vegetables and fish in abundance, and where the natives were of a friendly disposition.

Towards Aute, therefore, did they turn their steps, more eager now for food than for gold. The journey was perilous and

full of disaster. They had to cross deep lagoons and dismal swamps, with the water often up to their breasts, their passage obstructed by rotten trees, and beset by hordes of savages. These appeared to the disheartened Spaniards of gigantic height; they had bows of enormous size, from which they discharged arrows with such force as to penetrate armor at the distance of two hundred yards. At length, after incredible hardships, and with the loss of many men and horses, they arrived at the village of Aute.* The natives abandoned and burnt their houses on the approach of the invaders, but they left behind a quantity of maizé, with which the Spaniards appeased their hunger.

A day's march beyond the village brought them to a river, which gradually expanded into a large road, or arm of the sea. Here they came to a pause in their adventurous career, and held a consultation as to their future movements. Their hopes of wealth and conquest were at an end. Nearly a third of their original number had perished; while of the survivors a great majority were ill, and disease was daily spreading among them. To attempt to retrace their steps, or to proceed along the coast in search of the fleet, would be to hazard all their lives. At length it was suggested that they should construct small barks, launch them upon the deep, and keep along the coast until they should find their ships. It was a forlorn hope, but they caught at it like desperate men. They accordingly set to work with great eagerness. One of them constructed a pair of bellows out of deer-skins, furnishing it with a wooden pipe. Others made charcoal and a forge. By the aid of these they soon turned their stirrups, spurs, crossbows, and other articles

* Supposed to be on what is now called the Bay of St. Marks.

of iron, into nails, saws, and hatchets. The tails and manes of the horses, twisted with the fibres of the palm-tree, served for rigging; their shirts, cut open and sewed together, furnished sails; the fibrous part of the palm-tree, also, was used as oakum; the resin of the pine-trees for tar; the skins of horses were made into vessels to contain fresh water; and a quantity of maize was won by hard fighting from the neighboring natives. A horse was killed every three days for provisions for the laboring hands and the sick. Having at length by great exertions completed five frail barks, they embarked on the 22d of September, from forty to fifty persons being in each; but so closely crowded were they, that there was scarcely room to move, while the gunwale of the boats was forced down by their weight to the water's edge.

Setting sail from this bay, which they called the Bay of Caballos, they continued on for several days to an island where they secured five canoes that had been deserted by the Indians. These being attached to their barks, enabled them to sail with greater comfort. They passed through the strait between the island and the mainland, which they called the Strait of San Miguel, and sailed onward for many days, enduring all the torments of hunger and parching thirst: the skins which contained their fresh water having burst, some, driven to desperation, drank salt water, and died miserably. Their sufferings were aggravated by a fearful storm. At length they approached a more populous and fertile part of the coast, upon which they landed occasionally to procure provisions, and were immediately involved in bloody affrays with the natives. Thus harassed by sea and land, famishing with hunger, their barks shattered and scarcely manageable, these unfortunate wanderers lost all

presence of mind, and became wild and desperate. They were again driven out to sea, and scattered during a stormy night. At daybreak three of these tempest-tossed barks rejoined each other. In one, which was the best manned and the best sailer, was Pamphilo de Narvaez. Alvar Nuñez, who had command of another, seeing the Adelantado making for the land, called upon him for aid. Narvaez replied that it was no longer time to help others, but that every one must take care of himself. He then made for the shore, and abandoned Alvar Nuñez to make the best of his way with the other bark.

After wandering along the coast in his bark for many days Narvaez anchored one night off the land. All his crew had gone on shore for provisions, excepting one sailor and a page who was sick. A violent gale sprang up from the north, and the vessel, in which was neither food nor water, was driven out to sea, and no tidings ever heard of her after. Thus perished the ill-fated Pamphilo de Narvaez.

The only survivors of this disastrous expedition were Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, and four of his companions. After the most singular and unparalleled hardships, they traversed the northern parts of Florida, crossed the Mississippi, and the desert and mountainous regions on the confines of Texas and the Rocky Mountains, passing from tribe to tribe of Indians, oftentimes as slaves, until at the end of several years they succeeded in reaching the Spanish settlement of Compostella. From thence Alvar Nuñez proceeded to Mexico, and ultimately arrived at Lisbon in 1537; nearly ten years after his embarkation with Pamphilo de Narvaez.*

* This chapter is chiefly taken from the "Naufragios de Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca," with occasional references to Herrera.

CHAPTER III.

HERNANDO DE SOTO—HIS BIRTH—ADVENTURES IN PERU—FITS OUT AN ARMAMENT FOR FLORIDA—TOUCHES AT THE CANARY ISLANDS—ARRIVAL AT CUBA.

One would have thought that after the melancholy result of these sad enterprises, and others of less note, but equally unfortunate, the coast of Florida would have been avoided as a fated land. The Spanish discoverers, however, were not to be deterred by difficulties and dangers, and the accounts rendered of the vast extent of this unknown country, and of opulent regions in its interior, served to prompt to still bolder and more costly enterprises.

It is proper to note that the Spaniards, at this period, had a very vague idea of the country called Florida, and by no means limited it to its present boundaries. They knew something of the maritime border of the peninsula, but Florida, according to their notions, extended far beyond, having the confines of Mexico in one direction, the banks of Newfoundland in another, and expanding into a vast Terra Incognita to the north.

The accounts brought to Europe by Alvar Nuñez, of the expedition of Pamphilo de Narvaez, contributed to promote this

idea. It was supposed that this unfortunate cavalier, in his extensive march, had but skirted the borders of immense internal empires, which might rival in opulence and barbaric splendor the recently discovered kingdoms of Mexico and Peru; and there was not wanting a bold and ambitious spirit to grasp immediately at the palm of conquest.

The candidate that now presented himself for the subjugation of Florida, was Hernando de Soto, and as his expedition is the subject of the succeeding pages, it is proper to introduce him particularly to the reader. Hernando de Soto was born about the year 1501, in Villa nueva de Barcarota,* and was of the old Spanish hidalguiá, or gentry, for we are assured by one of his biographers that "he was a gentleman by all four descents;" that is to say, the parents both of his father and mother were of gentle blood; a pedigree which, according to the rules of Spanish heraldry, entitled him to admission into the noble order of Santiago.

Whatever might be the dignity of his descent, however, he began his career a mere soldier of fortune. All his estate, says his Portuguese historian, was but a sword and buckler. He accompanied Pedrarias Davila,† when he went to America to assume the command of Terra Firma. The merits of De Soto soon gained him favor in the eye of Pedrarias, who gave him command of a troop of horse: with these he followed Pizarro in his conquering expedition into Peru. Here he soon signalized himself by a rare combination of prudence and valor: he was excellent in council, yet foremost in every perilous exploit; not recklessly seeking

* The Portuguese narrator assigns Xeres de Badajos as the birthplace of De Soto; we follow, however, the authority of the Inca Garselasso de la Vega. Herrera (Hist. Ind. Dec. vi. L. vii. c. 9,) agrees with the Inca.

† Properly written Pedro Arias de Avila.

danger for danger's sake, or through a vain thirst for notoriety, but bravely putting every thing at hazard where any important point was to be gained by intrepidity.

Pizarro soon singled him out from the hardy spirits around him, and appointed him his lieutenant.* Was there a service of especial danger to be performed—De Soto had it in charge: was there an enterprise requiring sound judgment and fearless daring —De Soto was sure to be called upon. A master at all weapons, and a complete horseman, his prowess and adroitness were the admiration of the Spanish soldiery. They declared that his lance alone was equal to any ten in the army; and that in the management of this chivalrous weapon, he was second only to Pizarro.

He was sent by that commander on the first embassy to the renowned and ill-fated Inca Atahualpa, whose subjects, we are told, were filled with surprise and admiration on beholding his wonderful feats of horsemanship.†

He afterwards commanded one of the squadrons of horse that captured this unfortunate Inca and routed his army of warriors.‡ He led the way with a band of seventy horsemen, to the discovery and subjugation of the great province of Cusco, in which he distinguished himself by the most daring and romantic achieve-

* Herrera, Hist. Ind., Decad. v. L. ii. c. 2.

† Herrera, Hist. Ind., Decad. v. L. iii. c. 10, says, Hernando de Soto sprang upon his horse, and aware that the eyes of the Inca were upon him, he made his steed curvet, caracole and leap, and striking in his spurs dashed up so near to the savage prince that he felt the very breath of the snorting animal. The haughty Inca was as serene and unmoved as if he had been accustomed all his life to the charge of a horse. Many of the Indians, however, fled in terror. Atahualpa immediately ordered the fugitives to appear before him, and sternly reprehending them with their cowardice, ordered them all to be put to death for having behaved so dastardly in his royal presence.

‡ Vega, Com. de Peru, L. i. c. 21. Herrera, D. v. L. ii. c. 11.

ments.* We might trace him throughout the whole history of the Peruvian conquest by a series of perilous encounters and marvellous escapes, but our purpose is only to state briefly the circumstances which directed his ambition into the career of conquest, and which elevated him to the notice of his sovereign, and of all contemporary cavaliers of enterprising spirit.

Hernando de Soto returned to Spain enriched by the spoils of the new world; his share of the treasures of Atahualpa having amounted, it is said, to the enormous sum of a hundred and eighty thousand crowns of gold. He now assumed great state and equipage, and appeared at the court of the Emperor Charles V., at Valladolid, in magnificent style, having his steward, his majordomo, his master of the horse, his pages, lackeys, and all the other household officers that in those ostentatious days swelled the retinue of a Spanish nobleman. He was accompanied by a knot of brave cavaliers, all evidently bent on pushing their fortunes at court. Some of them had been his brothers in arms in the conquest of Peru, and had returned with their purses well filled with Peruvian gold, which they expended in soldierlike style, on horses, arms, and "rich array." Two or three of them deserve particular notice, as they will be found to figure conspicuously in the course of this narrative. Nuño Tobar, a native of Xeres de Badajos, was a young cavalier of gallant bearing, great valor, and romantic generosity. Another, Luis de Moscoso de Alvorado, likewise of Xeres, had signalized himself in his campaigns in the new world. A third, Juan de Añasco, was a native of Seville. He had not been in Peru, but was not inferior to the others in bravery of spirit, while he was noted for his nautical skill and his knowledge of cosmography and astronomy.

* Herrera, Dec. v. L. iv. c. x., and lib. v. c. 2. 3.

The world was at that time resounding with the recent conquest of Peru. The appearance at court of one of the conquerors, thus brilliantly attended, could not fail to attract attention. The personal qualifications of De Soto corresponded with his fame. He was in the prime of manhood, being about thirty-six years of age, of a commanding height, above the middle size, and a dark, animated, and expressive countenance. With such advantages, of person and reputation, he soon succeeded in gaining the affections and the hand of a lady of distinguished rank and merit, Isabella de Bobadilla, daughter to Pedrarias Davila, Count of Puño en Rostro. This marriage, connecting him with a powerful family, had a great effect in strengthening his influence at court.*

De Soto might now have purchased estates, and passed the remainder of his days opulently and honorably in his native land, in the bosom of his connections, but he was excited by the remembrance of past adventures, and eager for further distinction. Just at this juncture, Alvar Nuño Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain with tidings of the fate of Pamphilo de Narvaez and his followers. His tale, it is true, was one of hardships and disasters, but it turned the thoughts of adventurous men to the vast and unknown interior of Florida. It is said that Alvar Nuñez observed some reserve and mystery in his replies when questioned, as to whether they had found any riches in the country they had visited; that he talked of asking permission of the crown to return there and prosecute the discovery, and that he had even sworn his fellow survivors to secrecy as to what they had seen, lest others should be induced to interfere with his prospects.†

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 1.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 2.

The imagination of De Soto took fire from what he gathered of the narrative of Alvar Nuñez. He doubted not there existed in the interior of Florida some regions of wealth, equalling, if not exceeding, Mexico and Peru. He had hitherto only followed in the course of conquest; an opportunity now presented of rivalling the fame of Cortes and Pizarro; his reputation, his wealth, his past services, and his marriage connections—all gave him the means of securing the chance before him. In the magnificent spirit of a Spanish cavalier, he asked permission of the Emperor to undertake the conquest of Florida at his own expense and risk.

His prayer was readily granted. The Emperor conferred on him in advance, the title of Adelantado, which combines military and civil command, and granted him moreover a marquisite, with an estate of thirty leagues in length and fifteen in breadth, in any part of the country he might discover. He likewise created him governor and captain-general for life, of Florida, as well as of the Island of Cuba. The command of this island had been annexed at the especial request of De Soto, as he knew it would be important to have the complete control of it, to fit out and supply armaments for the meditated conquest.

No sooner was he thus gratified in his wishes, than he provided for the brothers in arms who had accompanied him to court. Nuño de Tobar he appointed his lieutenant-general, for which post he was well qualified by his great valor and his popular qualities. Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado he made camp-master-general, and he procured for Juan de Añasco the appointment of Contador, or royal accountant, whose duty it was to take account of all the treasures gained in the expedition, and to set apart one fifth for the crown.

De Soto would likewise have engaged Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca to accompany him, and offered him highly advantageous terms, which he was at first inclined to accept, but subsequently refused, being unwilling to march under the command of another in an enterprise in which he had aspired to take the lead. He afterwards obtained from the Emperor the government of Rio de la Plata.*

But though Alvar Nuñez declined to embark in the enterprise, his representations of the country induced two of his kinsmen to offer their services. One of them, a brave and hearty cavalier, named Balthazar de Gallegos, was so eager for the expedition that he sold his houses, vineyards and cornfields, and fourscore and ten acres of olive orchards, in the neighborhood of Seville, and determined to take his wife with him to the new world. De Soto was so well pleased with his zeal, that he made him Alguazil Mayor. The other kinsman of Alvar Nuñez was named Christopher Spinola, a gentleman of Genoa, to whom De Soto gave the command of seventy halberdiers of his body-guard.

It was soon promulgated throughout Spain that Hernando de Soto, one of the conquerors of Peru, was about to set out on the conquest of the great empire of Florida, an unknown country, equal if not superior in wealth and splendor to any of the golden empires of the new world, and that he was to do it at his own expense, with the riches gained in his previous conquests.

This was enough to draw to his standard adventurers of all kinds and classes. Cavaliers of noble birth, soldiers of fortune who had served in various parts of the world, private citizens and peaceful artisans, all abandoned their homes and families, sold

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 4.

their effects, and offered themselves and their resources for this new conquest.

A striking account is given us of the arrival of a party of these volunteers. As De Soto was one day in the gallery of his house at Seville, he saw a brilliant band of cavaliers enter the court-yard, and hastened to the foot of the stairs to receive them. They were Portuguese hidalgos, led by Andres de Vasconcelos; several of them had served in the wars with the Moors on the African frontiers, and they had come to volunteer their services. De Soto joyfully accepted their offer. He detained them to supper, and ordered his steward to provide quarters for them in his neighborhood. A muster being called of all the troops, the Spaniards appeared in splendid and showy attire, with silken doublets and cassocks pinked and embroidered. The Portuguese, on the contrary, came in soldierlike style, in complete armor. De Soto was vexed at the unseasonable ostentation of his countrymen, and ordered another review in which all should appear armed. Here the Portuguese again came admirably equipped, while the Spaniards, who had been so gaudy in their silken dresses, made but a sorry show as soldiers, having old rusty coats of mail, battered head-pieces, and indifferent lances. The general, it is said, marked his preference of the Portuguese, by placing them near his standard. It must be observed, however, that this account is given by a Portuguese historian, who naturally is disposed to give his countrymen the advantage of the Spaniards. Other accounts speak generally of the excellent equipments of all the forces.

In little more than a year from the time of the first proclamation of this enterprise, nine hundred and fifty Spaniards of all degrees had assembled in the port of San Lucar de Barrameda,

to embark in the expedition.* Never had a more gallant and brilliant body of men offered themselves for the new world Scarcely one among them had gray hairs, all were young and vigorous, and fitted for the toils and hardships and dangers of so adventurous an undertaking.

De Soto was munificent in his proffers of pecuniary assistance to aid the cavaliers in fitting themselves out according to their rank and station. Many were compelled, through necessity, to accept of his offers; others, who had means, generously declined them, deeming it more proper that they should assist, than accept aid from him: many young cavaliers came equipped in splendid style, with rich armor, costly dresses, and a train of domestics. Indeed, some young men of quality had spent a great part of their substance in this manner.

Nuño Tobar, Luis de Moscoso, and several other cavaliers, who had distinguished themselves in the conquest of Peru, expended the greater part of their spoils in sumptuous equipments. Beside the cavaliers already specified, we may mention three brothers, relatives of the governor, who accompanied him; Arias Tinoco and Alonzo Romo de Cardeñosa, both captains of infantry, and Diego Arias Tinoco, who was standard-bearer to the army.

There were also enlisted in the enterprise twelve priests, eight clergymen of inferior rank, and four monks; most of them relatives of the superior officers: for, in all the Spanish expeditions to the new world, the conversion of the heathen was not lost sight of in the rage for conquest

* The Portuguese narrator gives six hundred as the number of men assembled, but we follow the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, whose authority is corroborated by Herrera and others.

This brilliant armament embarked at San Lucar de Barrameda, on the sixth of April, 1538, in seven large and three small vessels. In the largest, called the San Christoval, which was of eight hundred tons, embarked the governor, with his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, and all his family and retinue. They set sail in company with a fleet of twenty-six sail bound to Mexico,* and with great sound of trumpets and thunder of artillery. The armament of De Soto was so bountifully supplied with naval stores, that each man was allowed double rations. This led to useless waste; but the governor was of a magnificent spirit, and so elated at finding in his train such noble and gallant cavaliers, that he thought he could not do enough to honor and gratify them.

On the twenty-first of April, the fleet arrived at Gomera, one of the Canary Islands. Here they were received with great parade and courtesy by the governor, who bore the title of Count de Gomera. The count seems to have been a gay and luxurious cavalier, with somewhat of an amatory complexion, his domestic establishment being graced by several natural daughters. When he came forth to receive his guests he was dressed in white from head to foot, hat, cloak, doublet, breeches and shoes; so that, according to the old Portuguese narrative, he looked not unlike a captain of a gang of gipsies. During three days that the fleet remained in the port, he entertained his guests in jovial style, with feastings and rejoicings.

Among his daughters was one named Leonora de Bobadilla, who particularly attracted the notice of the youthful cavaliers. She was not more than seventeen years of age, and extremely beautiful. De Soto was so pleased and interested with her ap-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 4.

pearance and manners, that he entreated the count to permit her to accompany his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, who would cherish her as her own daughter; intimating that he would procure an advantageous match for her among the noble cavaliers of his army, and advance her to rank and fortune in the country he should conquer.

The Count de Gomera, knowing the munificence of De Soto, and that he would be disposed to perform even more than he promised, confided his daughter to his care, and to the maternal protection of his high-minded and virtuous wife.

On the twenty-fourth April the fleet again set sail. The voyage was fair and prosperous, and about the last of May they arrived in the harbor of the city of Santiago de Cuba.

CHAPTER IV.

REJOICINGS OF THE INHABITANTS OF CUBA ON THE ARRIVAL F DE SOTO.— DEPOSITION OF NUÑO TOBAR.— DON VASCO PORCALLO DE FIGUEROA, APPOINTED LIEUTENANT-GENERAL OF THE FORCES.

The arrival of the new governor with so important an armament was an event of great joy throughout the island of Cuba. When De Soto landed, the whole city of Santiago turned out to receive him. He found a beautiful horse, richly caparisoned, waiting for him, and likewise a mule for Donna Isabella; which were furnished by a gentleman of the town. He was escorted to his lodgings, by the burghers on horse and on foot, and all his officers and men were hospitably entertained by them; some being quartered in the town, and others in their country-houses.* For several days it was one continued festival. At night there were balls and masquerades; by day, tilting matches, bull-fights, contests of skill in horsemanship, running at the ring, and other amusements of a chivalrous nature.

The young cavaliers of the army vied with each other, and with the youth of the city, in the gallantry of their equipments, the elegance and novelty of their devices, and the wit and ingenuity of their mottoes. What gave peculiar splendor to

* Portuguese Relation, c. 4.

these entertainments was the beauty and spirit and excellence of the horses. The great demand for these noble animals, for the conquests of Mexico and Peru, and other parts, rendered the raising of them one of the most profitable sources of speculation in the islands. The island of Cuba was naturally favorable to them; and as great care and attention had been given to multiply and improve the breed, there was at this time an uncommon number, and of remarkably fine qualities. Many individuals had from twenty to thirty horses in their stables, and some of the rich had twice that number on their estates.

The cavaliers of the army had spared no expense in furnishing themselves with the most superb and generous steeds for their intended expedition. Many individuals possessed three or four, caparisoned in the most costly manner; and the governor aided liberally with his purse, such as had not the means of equipping themselves in suitable style.

Thus freshly and magnificently mounted, and arrayed in their new dresses and burnished armor, the young cavaliers made a brilliant display, and carried off many of the prizes of gold, and silver, and silks, and brocades, which were adjudged to those who distinguished themselves at these chivalrous games.

In these, no one carried off the prize more frequently than Nuño de Tobar, the lieutenant-general. He was, as has been said, a cavalier of high and generous qualities, who had gained laurels in the conquest of Peru. He appeared on these occasions in sumptuous array, mounted on a superb horse, of a silver gray dappled, and was always noted for the gracefulness of his carriage, his noble demeanor, and his admirable address in the management of lance and steed.

Unfortunately the manly qualifications of Nuño Tobar had procured him great favor in the eyes of the beautiful Leonora de Bobadilla, the daughter of the Count de Gomera. A secret amour was carried on between them, and the virtue of the lady was not proof against the solicitations of her lover.*

The consequences of their unfortunate intercourse were soon too apparent to be concealed. De Soto was incensed at what he considered an outrage upon his rights as a guardian over the lady, and his confidence as a friend. He immediately deposed Nuño Tobar from his station as lieutenant-general; and, though that really generous spirited cavalier endeavored to make every reparation in his power, by marrying the lady, De Soto could never afterwards be brought to look upon him with kindness.

At this time there was on a visit to the governor in the city of Santiago, a cavalier, upwards of fifty years of age, named Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. He was of a noble family, and of a brave and galliard disposition, having seen much hard fighting in the Indies, in Spain and Italy, and distinguished himself on various occasions. He now resided in the town of Trinidad in Cuba, living opulently and luxuriously upon the wealth he had gained in the wars, honored for his exploits, loved for his social qualities, and extolled for his hearty hospitality.

This magnificent cavalier had come to Santiago with a pompous retinue, to pay his court to the governor, and witness the festivities and rejoicings. He passed some days in the city, and when he beheld the array of gallant cavaliers and hardy soldiers assembled for the enterprise, the splendor of their equipments, and the martial style with which they acquitted themselves in public, his military spirit again took fire, and forgetting his

* Portuguese Narrative of Conq. of Florida, c. 7.

years, his past toils and troubles, and his present ease and opulence, he volunteered his services to De Soto, to follow him in his anticipated career of conquest.

A volunteer of such military experience, ample wealth, and great influence in the island, was too important not to be received with open arms; the governor immediately made him lieutenant general of the army; the post from which the gallant but unfortunate Nuño Tobar had recently been deposed.

The conduct of Vasco Porcallo showed the policy of this appointment. He was so elated with this distinction, that he lavished his money without stint in purchasing provisions for the armada. He was magnificent too in all his appointments, camp equipage, armor and equipments, having caught the gay and braggart spirit of his youthful companions in arms. He carried with him a great train of Spanish, Indian and negro servants, and a stud of thirty-six horses for his own use; while, with the open-handed liberality for which he was noted, he gave upwards of fifty horses as presents to various cavaliers of the army.

The example of this generous and high-mettled, though somewhat whimsical old cavalier, had a powerful effect in animating the inhabitants of Cuba to promote the success of the expedition, and in inducing some of them to enroll themselves among the followers of De Soto.*

* The Portuguese narrator dryly asserts that Vasco Porcallo engaged in the expedition merely with a view to get slaves for his estates in Cuba. This narrator, however, is to be distrusted, when he assigns motives to the Spanish leaders, for whom he seems to have entertained a national jealousy. I have preferred the motives attributed by the Inca, as they seem borne out by facts, and by the general conduct of this veteran Porcallo, whose character is quite Spanish and peculiar. Indeed, throughout the whole work of the Inca, his rich and copious facts are always in harmony with the characteristics of his persons.

CHAPTER V.

JUAN DE ANASCO TWICE DISPATCHED TO FLORIDA.—HIS NARROW ESCAPE AND SAFE RETURN.—FINAL PREPARATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR.

For three months the governor made a tour of the island, visiting the principal towns, appointing officers of justice to rule in his absence, purchasing horses, and making other provisions for his expedition. Towards the end of August he repaired to Havana, where he was afterwards joined by his family and all his forces. Here he remained for a time, aiding the inhabitants, out of his own fortune, to rebuild their houses and churches, which had recently been destroyed by French corsairs.

While thus occupied he twice dispatched the Contador Juan de Añasco, in a brigantine manned with picked sailors, to coast the shores of Florida, in quest of some commodious harbor to which the expedition might sail direct, and find secure anchorage, and a good landing place for the troops.

Juan de Añasco was well fitted for such a service, combining the sailor with the soldier, and possessing some skill in nautical science. He was fond, too, of hazardous enterprise, never flinching from toils or perils, and was an excellent leader, though somewhat touchy and choleric.

Three months elapsed after his departure on his second voyage, without any tidings of him, and great fears were entertained for his safety, when at length his tempest-tossed bark arrived at Havana.

No sooner did Juan de Añasco and his crew put foot upon land, than they threw themselves on their knees, and in this way crawled to church to hear mass, in fulfilment of a vow made in an hour of great peril. This done, they related all the dangers they had passed on sea and land: having once been in imminent peril of foundering, and having passed two months on an uninhabited island, subsisting on shell-fish gathered along the beach, and wild-fowl knocked down with clubs.

Añasco, however, had fulfilled the great object of his cruise, having found a secure harbor on the coast of Florida. He brought with him four of the captured natives, to serve as interpreters and guides.

All his forces being now assembled in Havana, and the season favorable for sailing being at hand, the governor made his final arrangements, appointing his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla to govern the island during his absence, with Juan de Roxas as lieutenant-governor, and Francisco de Guzman as his lieutenant, in the city of Santiago. These two cavaliers had been in command prior to his arrival at the island, and had proved themselves worthy of this great mark of confidence.*

* The Inca, Lib. i. c. 13.

† Portuguese Relation, c. vii., Herrera, D. vi. L. vii. c. 2.

CHAPTER VI.

DE SOTO MEETS WITH AN OLD COMRADE, HERNAN PONCE—MUCH AGAINST THE WILL OF THE LATTER.

While the governor was waiting for a fair wind to embark and set sail, a ship was seen hovering off the port, driven thither by stress of weather, but evidently endeavoring to keep to sea. Three times it was forced to the mouth of the harbor, and as often fought its way against contrary winds to the broad ocean, as if the greatest anxiety of the crew was to avoid the port. At length, after struggling four or five days against tempestuous weather, it was compelled to come to anchor in the harbor.

This ship came from Nombre de Dios, on the Isthmus of Panama, and this was the story of its singular conduct. On board it was Hernan Ponce, an old comrade of Hernando De Soto. They had sought their fortunes together in Peru, and when De Soto had left that country for a time to visit Spain, he entered into articles of partnership, or brotherhood, as it was called, with Hernan Ponce, as was frequently done by the Spanish discoverers and soldiers of fortune in the new world. By these articles they bound themselves, during their lives, to an equal participation of gains and losses, and of all things, whether of honor or profit.

After the departure of De Soto for Spain, Hernan Ponce had amassed much wealth, and had recovered several debts which De Soto had left with him to be collected. Having turned all his property into gold and silver, and jewels and precious stones, he embarked for Spain, but, at the port of embarkation, heard of the new enterprise of his old companion De Soto, and that he was at Havana with a great and expensive armament for the conquest of Florida.

Hernan Ponce had no ambition of joining in the conquest; and feared that De Soto, having expended all his own wealth upon his outfits, would claim his right of partnership and seek to share the treasures he was carrying home, if not to grasp the whole. Hernan Ponce, therefore, had been anxious to steer clear of the port of Havana and pursue his voyage, and had made large offers to the mariners to induce them to keep to sea, but tempestuous weather had absolutely driven them into port. No sooner did Hernando De Soto hear of the arrival of his ancient comrade and partner, than he sent persons on board to compliment and congratulate him upon his arrival, and invite him on shore to share with him his house, his possessions, and all his honors and commands. The message he followed up in person, repeating his congratulations and offers.

Hernan Ponce would gladly have dispensed with both compliments and fraternity, and quaked in secret for the safety of his treasures. He affected, however, to reciprocate the joy and good will of his former comrade, but excused himself from landing until the following day, pleading the necessity of sleep and repose after the fatigues of the late tempest. De Soto left him to his repose, but suspecting, or having had some intimation of his real circumstances and designs, secretly stationed senti-

nels by sea and by land to keep watch upon his movements. His precautions were not in vain. Hernan Ponce about midnight sent two coffers, containing all his gold, pearls, and precious stones, to be concealed in some hamlet, or buried on the shore, leaving only the silver on board, to keep up appearances, intending to pass it off on his partner as the whole of his wealth.

No sooner had the mariners landed the coffers, and conveyed them some distance from the boat, than a party of sentinels rushed out from a thicket, put them to flight, seized upon the treasure, and conveyed it to the governor.

The confusion and distress of Hernan Ponce, at losing his beloved treasure, may easily be imagined. He landed the next day with a sorrowful countenance, and took up his abode with De Soto.

In private conversation, he revealed the misfortune of the preceding night. De Soto had been waiting for the occasion, and now broke forth indignantly, reproaching him with having attempted to conceal his treasures, through want of faith in his justice and friendship. To show how groundless was his distrust, he ordered the coffers to be brought in, and requested him to open them and see if any thing were missing.

He furthermore declared that all he had expended in his present undertaking, and all the titles, commands, and privileges he had obtained from the crown, he had considered as for their mutual benefit, according to their terms of co-partnership and fraternity; as he could prove by witnesses with him, who had been present at the execution of the writings He now offered, whether he chose to accompany him in his conquest or not, to share with him his titles and commands, or to yield to him such of them as he might prefer.

Hernan Ponce was confounded by the overwhelming courtesy of the governor, and the sense of his own delinquency; but his heart yearned more after his own treasures than after all De Soto's anticipated conquests. He excused himself as well as he could for the past, pretended to be highly gratified at being still considered partner and brother, but declined all participation in De Soto's titles. He begged that their writings of co-partnership might be renewed and made public, and that his Excellency would proceed with his conquest, while he should return to Spain; leaving to some future occasion the division of all their gains. To testify his acceptance of one half of the conquest, he entreated his Excellency to permit his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, to receive from him ten thousand dollars in gold and silver, to aid in the expenses of the expedition: being the half of what he had brought from Peru.

De Soto granted his prayer; the ten thousand dollars were paid into the hands of Doña Isabel, the articles of co-partnership were renewed, and during the whole stay of Hernan Ponce at Havana, he was always addressed as his Excellency, and received the same personal honors as the governor.

The heart of Hernan Ponce, however, rested with his money bags, and delighted not in these empty honors. Under various pretexts, he deferred sailing for Spain until after the departure of De Soto and his army for Florida. Eight days after the governor had sailed, when there was no likelihood of his prompt return, Hernan Ponce addressed an instrument in writing to Juan de Rojas, the lieutenant-governor, declaring that the ten thousand dollars given to Hernando de Soto had not been paid as a just debt, but extorted through fear lest he should make use of his power to strip him of all his property. He begged, there-

fore, that Doña Isabel de Bobadilla might be compelled to refund them, otherwise he should complain to the Emperor of the injustice with which he had been treated.

To this claim, Doña Isabel replied, that there were many accounts both new and old to be settled between Hernan Ponce and her husband, as would be seen by their writings of co-partnership. That Hernan Ponce owed her husband more than fifty thousand ducats, as half of the amount expended in the outfit for the conquest. She demanded, therefore, that he should be arrested and held in safety until all these accounts could be examined and adjusted, which she offered immediately to attend to, in the name of her husband.

Hernan Ponce obtained a hint of the new troubles preparing for him, and fearing, should he fall into the hands of justice, he would meet with but little mercy, he hoisted sail before the harpies of the law could get hold of him, and made the best of his way to Spain, leaving his ten thousand dollars and all the unsettled accounts in the hands of Doña Isabel.* Having thus disposed of this episode, we will step back eight days in our chronology, to relate the sailing of the expedition for Florida.

* Hist. of Florida, per el Inca, Lib. i. c. 14, 15.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARMAMENT SETS SAIL FROM CUBA—ARRIVAL AND LANDING IN FLORIDA—EXPLOIT OF VASCO PORCALLO—THEY COME UPON THE FIRST TRACES OF PAMPHILO DE NARVAEZ.

On the 12th May,* 1539, Hernando De Soto sailed from Havana on his great enterprise. His squadron consisted of eight large vessels, a caravel, and two brigantines, all freighted with ample means of conquest and colonization. In addition to the forces brought from Spain, he had been joined by many volunteers, and recruits in Cuba, so that his armament, besides the ships' crews, amounted to a thousand men, with three hundred and fifty horses. It was altogether the most splendid expedition that had yet set out for the new world.

The prevalence of contrary winds kept the squadron tossing about, for several days, in the Gulf of Mexico. At length on Whitsunday, the twenty-fifth day of May, they arrived at the mouth of a deep bay, to which, in honor of the day, De Soto gave the name of Espiritu Santo, now known as Tampa Bay.

They had scarce arrived on the coast, when they beheld bale-fires blazing along the shores, and columns of smoke rising in

* In De Soto's letter to the magistrates of Santiago, he says, he sailed on the 18th of May.

different directions. It was evident the natives had taken the alarm, and were summoning their warriors to assemble. De Sotto was cautious, therefore, as to debarking his troops, and remained several days on board; sounding the harbor, and seeking a secure landing-place. In the mean time a boat sent on shore to procure grass for the horses, brought off a quantity of green grapes, which grew wild in the woods. They were of a kind different from any that the Spaniards had seen either in Mexico or Peru, and they regarded them with exultation as proofs of a fruitful and pleasant country.

At length, on the last day of the month, a detachment of three hundred soldiers landed, and took formal possession of the country, in the name of Charles V. Not a single Indian was to be seen, and the troops remained all night on shore, in a state of careless security. Towards the dawn of day, however, an immense number of savages broke upon them with deafening yells; several of the Spaniards were wounded with arrows, many were seized with panic, as new levied troops are apt to be in their first encounter, especially when in a strange land and assailed by strange foes. They retreated to the edge of the sea in confusion, crowding together so as to prevent each other from fighting to advantage, and sounding the alarm with drum and trumpet.

The din of the tumult reached the fleet. The late seemingly lifeless hulks were immediately as busy as hives of bees, when their republic is invaded: armor was buckled on in haste, and a reinforcement landed. The lieutenant-general Vasco Porcallo, with seven horsemen, took the lead, not a little pleased with having so early an opportunity of displaying his prowess. Dashing his spurs into his horse, and brandishing his lance, he charged upon the savages, who made but slight resistance, and fled. He

pursued them for some distance, and then returned highly elated with this first snuff of battle.

Scarcely had he reached the camp, however, when his horse staggered under him and fell dead, having been wounded by an arrow in the course of the skirmish. The shaft had been sent with such force as to pass through the saddle and its housings, and to bury itself, one third of its length, between the ribs of the horse. Vasco Porcallo rose triumphant from his fall, vaunting that the first horse that had fallen in this expedition was his, and his the first lance raised against the infidels.

The remainder of the troops were now disembarked and encamped on the borders of the bay, where they remained a few days reposing after the fatigues of the sea. They then marched to a village situated about two leagues distant; while the ships, being lightened by the landing of the troops, were enabled, with the aid of the tide, to take their station opposite.

The village was deserted by the inhabitants. It consisted of several large houses, built of wood and thatched with palm-leaves. At one end stood a kind of temple, with the image of a bird on top, made of wood, with gilded eyes. In this edifice were found strings of pearls of small value, having been injured by the fire, in boring them for necklaces and bracelets.

In an opposite quarter of the village, upon an artificial eminence near the shore, so constructed as to serve as a fortress, stood the dwelling of the cacique.* Here the governor took up

* Mr. G. R. Fairbanks informs me that there is now at Tampa, an artificial eminence near the water, corresponding to that on which the house of the cacique is said to have stood; and adds, to strengthen the belief, that such artificial structures could last so many centuries, that excavations or embankments once made in a soil like that of Florida, do not become effaced for cen-

his residence, with his lieutenant, the veteran Porcallo, and his camp-master Luis de Moscoso. The other houses were converted into barracks for the troops, and storehouses for the provisions and ammunition brought on shore from the vessels. The trees and bushes were cleared away, for the distance of a bow-shot round the village, so as to give room for the cavalry to act, and to guard against sudden surprise in the night time. Sentinels also were placed at every point, and parties of horsemen patrolled the neighborhood.

The governor at length succeeded in capturing a few straggling Indians, natives of the place, from whom he learned the cause of the fierce hostility of their countrymen, and their desertion of the village. Here it was that he first came upon the traces of his predecessor, Pamphilo de Narvaez, and unfortunately they were of a cruel character. Narvaez in his expedition to Florida had been bravely opposed by the cacique of this village, whose name was Hirrihigua.* He succeeded, at length, in winning his

turies; and that even the slight ridges made by cultivation, may be traced with exactness in forests densely covered with huge oaks. He says it is also so with the trails or paths, and as De Soto undoubtedly followed these as far as he was able, he thinks that in judging of his route, much attention should be paid to these Indian trails, which, from the many intervening streams, swamps, and lakes, must have been generally used.

* We give this name according to Garcilaso de la Vega; the Portuguese narrator calls the cacique Uci'a. These two authorities often differ as to Indian names. Sometimes they merely vary in the spelling, as is natural where the names were caught by ear, and did not originally exist in writing. At other times they differ entirely; one narrator having probably heard a village and province called by its proper and permanent name, the other by the name of its cacique. These discrepancies are common and unavoidable, in the narratives of adventures among savage tribes, whose language is unwritten and but little understood. Where irreconcilable differences occur, we are generally inclined to follow the Inca, as he received his facts from three

friendship, and a treaty was formed between them. Subsequently, however, Narvaez became enraged at the cacique for some unknown reason, and in a transport of passion had ordered his nose to be cut off, and his mother to be torn to pieces by dogs. These merciless wrongs, as may well be supposed, had filled the heart of Hirrihigua with the bitterest hatred of the white men.

De Soto endeavored to appease the cacique and gain his friendship. For this purpose he treated his subjects whom he had captured in the kindest manner, and sent them, laden with presents, to seek their chieftain and invite him to amicable intercourse. The cacique was indignant at his subjects for daring to bring him messages from a race who had injured and insulted him so deeply. "I want none of their speeches nor promises," said he, bitterly, "bring me their heads, and I will receive them joyfully."

De Soto was reluctant to leave so powerful a foe between himself and his ships, and endeavored, by repeated envoys, to soften his animosity: but every message only provoked a more bitter and scornful reply.

While thus negotiating with this vindictive savage, he received intelligence that there was a Spaniard, a survivor of the followers of Pamphilo de Narvaez living under the protection of a neighboring cacique called Mucozo.* To obtain the services of this Spaniard was now a matter of great moment with the governor, for, having lived upwards of ten years in the country, and

different members of the expedition, one a gentleman of rank, the other two private soldiers; whereas the Portuguese account has merely the authority of a single witness. The account of the transactions on landing are chiefly taken from the Inca, and occasionally from the Portuguese Narrative.

* Mocoso. Portuguese Narrative.

become acquainted with the language and customs of the natives he was well fitted to act as guide, interpreter, and negotiator. He accordingly dispatched the brave and trusty Baltasar de Gallegos, the chief Alguazil, at the head of sixty lances, and under the guidance of a native Indian, on an embassy to the cacique Mucozo, to obtain the release of the Spaniard, and invite the chieftain to the camp, with assurances of great friendship and munificent rewards.

As this Spaniard was subsequently of great service throughout the expedition, and as his story is illustrative of the character and customs of the natives, and of the implacable resentment of the cacique Hirrihigua, we will diverge for a moment from the main course of our narrative, to relate some particulars of his adventures.

CHAPTER VIII.

STORY OF JUAN ORTIZ.

Shortly after Pamphilo de Narvaez had left the village of Hirrihigua, on his disastrous march into the interior, a small vessel of his fleet, which was in quest of him, put into the bay of Espiritu Santo. Anchoring before the town, they saw a few Indians, who made signs for them to land, pointing to a letter in the end of a cleft reed, stuck in the ground. The Spaniards supposed, and probably with justice, that it was a letter of instruction left by Narvaez, giving information of his movements and destination. They made signs for the Indians to bring it to them. The latter, however, refused, but getting into a canoe came on board, where four of them offered to remain as hostages for such Spaniards as chose to go on shore for the letter. Upon this, four Spaniards stepped into the canoe and were swiftly conveyed to the shore. The moment they landed, a multitude of savages rushed out of the village and surrounded them, and, at the same time, the hostages on board plunged into the sea and swam to shore. The crew of the vessel, seeing the number of the enemy, and dreading some further mishap, made sail with all haste, abandoning their luckless comrades to their fate.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Part i. L. ii. c. 1. Portuguese Narrative, c. 9 Herrera, D. vi. L. vii. c 10.

The captives were conveyed with savage triumph into the village of Hirrihigua; for the whole had been a stratagem of the cacique, to get some of the white men into his power, upon whom he might wreak his vengeance. He placed his prisoners under a strong guard, until a day of religious festival. They were then stripped naked, led out into the public square of the village, and turned loose, one at a time, to be shot at with arrows. To prolong their misery and the enjoyment of their tormentors, but one Indian was allowed to shoot at a time. In this way the first three were sacrificed, and the cacique took a vindictive pleasure in beholding them, running in their agony from corner to corner, vainly seeking an asylum in every nook, until after repeated wounds they were shot to death.

Juan Ortiz, a youth, scarce eighteen years of age, of a noble family of Seville, was the fourth victim. As they were leading him forth, his extreme youth touched with compassion the hearts of the wife and daughters of the cacique, who interceded in his favor.

The cacique listened to their importunities, and granted for the present the life of Ortiz;—but a wretched life did he lead From morning until evening he was employed in bringing wood and water, and was allowed but little sleep and scanty food. Not a day passed that he was not beaten. On festivals he was an object of barbarous amusement to the cacique, who would oblige him to run, from sunrise until sunset, in the public square of the village, where his companions had met their untimely end; Indians being stationed with bows and arrows, to shoot him, should he halt one moment. When the day was spent, the unfortunate youth lay stretched on the hard floor of the hut, more dead than alive. At such times the wife and

daughters of the cacique would come to him privately with food and clothing, and by their kind treatment his life was preserved.

At length the cacique, determining to put an end to his victim's existence, ordered that he should be bound down upon a wooden frame, in the form of a huge gridiron, placed in the public square, over a bed of live coals, and roasted alive.

The cries and shrieks of the poor youth reached his female protectors, and their entreaties were once more successful with the cacique. They unbound Ortiz, dragged him from the fire, and took him to their dwelling, where they bathed him with the juice of herbs, and tended him with assiduous care. After many days he recovered from his wounds, though marked with many a scar.

His employment was now to guard the cemetery of the village. This was in a lonely field in the bosom of a forest. The bodies of the dead were deposited in wooden boxes, covered with boards, without any fastening except a stone or a log of wood laid upon the top; so that the bodies were often carried away by wild beasts.

In this cemetery was Ortiz stationed, with a bow and arrows, to watch day and night, and was told that should a single body be carried away, he would be burnt alive. He returned thanks to God for having freed him from the dreaded presence of the cacique, hoping to lead a better life with the dead than he had done with the living.

While watching thus one long wearisome night, sleep overpowered him towards morning. He was awakened by the falling lid of one of the chests, and, running to it, found it empty. It had contained the body of an infant recently deceased, the child of an Indian of great note.

Ortiz doubted not some animal had dragged it away, and immediately set out in pursuit. After wandering for some time, he heard, a short distance within the woods, a noise like that of a dog gnawing bones. Warily drawing near to the spot, he dimly perceived an animal among the bushes, and invoking succor from on high, let fly an arrow at it. The thick and tangled underwood prevented his seeing the effect of his shot, but as the animal did not stir, he flattered himself that it had been fatal: with this hope he waited until the day dawned, when he beheld his victim, a huge animal of the panther kind,* lying dead, the arrow having passed through his entrails and cleft his heart.

Gathering together the mangled remains of the infant, and replacing them in the coffin, Ortiz dragged his victim in triumph to the village, with the arrow still in his body. The exploit gained him credit with the old hunters, and for some time softened even the ferocity of the cacique. The resentment of the latter, however, for the wrongs he had suffered from white men, was too bitter to be appeased. Some time after, his eldest daughter came to Ortiz, and warned him that her father had determined to sacrifice him at the next festival, which was just at hand, and that the influence of her mother, her sisters, and herself would no longer avail him. She wished him, therefore, to take refuge with a neighboring cacique named Mucozo, who loved her and sought her in marriage, and who, for her sake, would befriend him. "This very night at midnight," said the kind-hearted maiden, "at the northern extremity of the village you will find a trusty friend who will guide you to a bridge,

* The Inca calls this animal a lion, as the Spanish discoverers were prone to call animals of the tiger or panther kind.

about two leagues hence; on arriving there, you must send him back, that he may reach home before the morning dawn, to avoid suspicion—for well he knows that this bold act, in daring to assist you, may bring down destruction upon us both. Six leagues further on, you will come to the village of Mucozo—tell him that I have sent you, and expect him to befriend you in your extremity—I know he will do it—go, and may your God protect you!" Ortiz threw himself at the feet of his generous protectress, and poured out his acknowledgments for the kindness she had always shown him. The Indian guide was at the place appointed, and they left the village without alarming the warlike savages. When they came to the bridge, Ortiz sent back the guide, in obedience to the injunction of his mistress, and, continuing his flight, found himself, by break of day, on the banks of a small stream near the village of Mucozo.

Looking cautiously around, he espied two Indians fishing. As he was unacquainted with their language, and could not explain the cause of his coming, he was in dread lest they should take him for an enemy and kill him. He, therefore, ran to the place where they had deposited their weapons and seized upon them. The savages fled to the village without heeding his assurances of friendly intention. The inhabitants sallied out with bows and arrows, as though they would attack him. Ortiz fixed an arrow in his bow, but cried out at the same moment, that he came not as an enemy but as an ambassador from a female cacique to their chief. Fortunately one present understood him, and interpreted his words. On this the Indians unbent their bows, and returning with him to their village, presented him to Mucozo. The latter, a youthful chieftain, of a graceful form and handsome countenance, received Ortiz kindly for the

sake of her who had sent him; but, on further acquaintance, became attached to him for his own merits, treating him with the affection of a brother.

Hirrihigua soon heard where the fugitive had taken refuge, and demanded several times that he should be delivered up; Mucozo as often declined; considering himself bound by the laws of honor and hospitality to protect him. Hirrihigua then employed as mediator another cacique, a brother-in-law of Mucozo, by the name of Urribarracuxi, who went in person to demand Ortiz. The generous Mucozo, however, refused to deliver up to a cruel enemy, the poor fugitive who had come recommended to his protection, and treated the very request as a stain upon his honor. The two caciques continued their importunities, but the high-minded savage remained faithful to his guest, though in maintaining inviolate the sacred rites of hospitality, he lost the friendship of his brother-in-law, and forfeited the hand of her he tenderly loved, the beautiful daughter of Hirrihigua.

CHAPTER IX.

BALTAZAR DE GALLEGOS DISPATCHED IN SEARCH OF JUAN ORTIZ —THE CACIQUE MUCOZO, AND AFTERWARDS HIS MOTHER, VISIT THE SPANISH CAMP.

1539.

At this juncture tidings reached Mucozo of the arrival of De Soto and his troops at the village of Hirrihigua, and that it was their intention to conquer the country. Alarmed at this intelligence, he addressed himself to Ortiz. "You all know," said he, "what I have done for you; that I have sheltered you when friendless, and have chosen rather to fall into disgrace with my relations and neighbors, than to deliver you into the hands of your enemies. This I did without thought or hope of reward, but the time has come when you can repay me for my friendship. Go to the chieftain of this army of white men—represent to him the asylum I have extended to you, and which, in like case, I would have afforded to any of your countrymen—entreat him, in return, not to lay waste my territory, and assure him that I and mine are ready to devote ourselves to his service."

Ortiz gladly departed on the mission, accompanied by fifty chosen warriors. It happened that about the same time Baltazar de Gallegos had been dispatched, as has been already mentioned, on his embassy to Mucozo.

As Ortiz and his Indian escort, therefore, were on their way to the village of Hirrihigua, they came in sight of Baltazar, and his band of lancers, glistening at a distance, in the midst of a verdant plain, skirted by a wood.

The Indians would have concealed themselves in the forest, until the Christians could be informed that they were friends; but Ortiz slighted their advice, insisting that his countrymen would at once recognize him: not reflecting that in appearance he was in nowise different from his savage companions, being like them almost naked, his body browned by exposure to the sun, his arms painted, a quiver at his back, a bow and arrow in his hand, and his head adorned with feathers.

No sooner did the Spaniards descry the savages, than they came down upon them at full gallop, heedless of the voice of their captain; for they were newly raised soldiers, full of spirit, and eager for a brush with the natives.

The Indians fled terrified to the wood. One, however, was overtaken and slain. Juan Ortiz was assaulted by Alvaro Nieto, one of the stoutest and boldest troopers in the army. Ortiz parried the thrust of his lance with his bow, running at the same time, and leaping from side to side with great agility to avoid the horse, crying out lustily Xivilla, Xivilla—meaning Seville, Seville; and making the sign of the cross with his arm and bow, to signify that he was a Christian.*

Alvaro Nieto hearing him cry out Xivilla, demanded of him whether he was Juan Ortiz. On his replying in the affirmative, he seized him by the arm, lifted him upon the croup of his saddle, and scoured away to present him to Baltazar de Gallegos. The captain received him with great joy, and ordered his troopers

* Biedma says he invoked the name of the Virgin.

to be recalled, who were beating up the woods and hunting the poor Indians like so many deer.

Ortiz himself went into the forest and called to the Indians, to come out and fear nothing. Many, however, fled back to their village, to acquaint Mucozo with what had happened. Others joined Ortiz in small parties, upbraiding him with his rashness, but when they found one of their people wounded, they were so exasperated, that they would have laid violent hands upon him had not the Spaniards been present.

They were at length pacified. The soldiers bound up the wounds of the Indian, and placed him upon a horse. The troopers, having taken up all the Indians behind them, galloped away for the encampment of the governor. Previously to setting off, however, Ortiz dispatched an Indian to Mucozo, with a true account of the late events, lest that cacique should be irritated by the alarming statement brought by the fugitives.*

The night was already far advanced when Baltazar de Gallegos and his band reached the camp. When the governor heard the tramp of their horse, he feared some mischance had befallen them, as he had not looked for them before the expiration of three days. His apprehensions were soon turned to rejoicing. He praised Gallegos and his men for the skill and success of their expedition, and received Ortiz as his own son, sympathizing with his past sufferings, and presenting him with a suit of clothes, arms, and a good horse.† The Indians he treated with kindness, and ordered the wounded savage to be carefully attended. He then dispatched two of the natives to Mucozo, thanking him for his past kindness

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 8. Herrera, D. vi. L. vii. c. 9.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 7. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. i. L. ii. c. 7. Herrera, Decad. vi. L. vii. c. 10.

to Ortiz, accepting his proffers of friendship, and inviting him to the camp. Not an eye was closed this night, but one and all joined in the revelry which welcomed the liberation of poor Ortiz.

On the third day after the envoys had been dispatched, the cacique arrived, accompanied by his warriors. He kissed the hands of the governor with great veneration, saluted each one of the officers, and made a slight obeisance to the privates. De Soto received him with affectionate courtesy, and assured him that his people would be ever grateful to him for all his past kindnesses. "What I have done unto Ortiz," said Mucozo, "is but little indeed; he came commended to me, and threw himself upon my protection. There is a law of our tribe, which forbids our betraying a fugitive who asks an asylum. But his own virtue and courage entitled him to all the respect shown him. That I have pleased your people, I rejoice exceedingly, and by devoting myself, henceforth, to their service, I hope to merit their esteem." These words were uttered with so much grace, his bearing was so noble and lofty, and his manner so full of kindness, that De Soto and his officers were touched, and made presents to him and his warriors.

Two days afterwards came the mother of Mucozo, overwhelmed with grief because her son was in the power of the Christians. She never would have consented to his visiting the army, but was absent at the time of his departure. She passionately entreated the governor to deliver up her son, and not serve him as Narvaez had served Hirrihigua. "He is young," said she; "only give him his liberty, and take me, who am a poor old woman, and treat me as you please. I will bear any punishment for both." De Soto endeavored to reassure her by expressions of gratitude and friend-

ship for her son and herself; but though she remained three days in the camp, and was treated by every one with respect and kindness, she continued anxious and suspicious. She ate at the table of the governor, but would partake of nothing until Ortiz had tasted it; fearing she might be poisoned. "How is this," said a Spaniard to her, "that you have now so great a fear of death, you who offered to die for your son?"

"I have the same love of life as other mortals," replied she, "but most willingly would I lose it to save a son, who is far dearer to me than life itself!"

Even when assured of the perfect liberty of Mucozo, and that he only remained for a time with the Spaniards through choice, because they were young braves like himself, she was but poorly comforted, and departed sorrowing for her home. On parting, she took Juan Ortiz aside, and besought him to liberate Mucozo, inasmuch as he had saved him from the vengeful hands of Hirrihigua.

The cacique remained in the army eight days, and during this time became very familiar, and was inspired with perfect confidence in the Spaniards. He went home well contented, and frequently afterwards revisited the governor, bringing always a number of presents.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega. P. i. L. ii. c. 7, 8.

CHAPTER X.

THE GOVERNOR ENDEAVORS TO GAIN THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE CACIQUE OF HIRRIHIGUA—GALLEGOS DISPATCHED ON AN EXPEDITION TO THE VILLAGE OF URRIBARRACAXI—HE HEARS OF A REGION TO THE WESTWARD ABOUNDING IN GOLD.

1539.

WHILE these things were passing in the camp, the provisions and munitions were landed from the caravels, and stored away in the village of Hirrihigua. The Adelantado, following the example of Cortes and other renowned captains, dispatched seven of the largest vessels to the Havana, in order that his followers might lose all hope of leaving the country, retaining only a caravel and two brigantines to keep command of the sea-coast and of the bay.* He appointed Pedro Calderon to the command of this important post. He was a hardy veteran, nursed in a rough school, amid camps and battle scenes, and had served in his youth under the great Captain Gonsalvo de Cordova.

De Soto left no means untried to gain the friendship of Hirrihigua, being aware that the example of this powerful chieftain would have great sway with the neighboring caciques. Accordingly, whenever the troopers, in foraging the adjacent country, captured a vassal of this cacique, he instantly sent him home loaded with presents and kind messages, urging Hirrihigua to

* Herrera, Hist. Ind., Decad. vi. L. vii. c. 10.

accept his proffered amity, and promising every reparation for the wrongs inflicted upon him by Pamphilo de Narvaez. These wrongs, however, were too deep to be easily obliterated from the stern bosom of the chieftain. The only reply he deigned to give was, "The memory of my injuries forbids my sending a kind answer, and a harsh one your courtesy will not allow me to return." Still these constant and unwearied exertions of De Soto in some measure mitigated the deadly rancor of the cacique against the Spaniards.

The governor made many inquiries of Ortiz respecting the country, and whether there was any region abounding in gold and silver. Ortiz knew of none, and could yield but little information. When with Hirrihigua he had been closely watched, and not allowed to wander: and although while dwelling with Mucozo he had perfect liberty, yet he dared not venture far, through fear of being waylaid by his enemies. He had heard much, however, of a cacique named Urribarracaxi, whose village was thirty leagues distant, who was the most powerful chieftain of the country. To him Mucozo, Hirrihigua, and all the other caciques of the coast paid tribute, and his territories were far more fertile and abundant than those nearer the sea.*

Upon this the governor dispatched Baltazar de Gallegos on an expedition to the village of this powerful cacique. Gallegos chose the same sixty lances that had accompanied him when in search of Juan Ortiz, and other sixty foot-soldiers, armed with

* Portuguese Relation, c. 9. The name of the cacique in the Portuguese Narrative is Paracoxi. In the relation of Luis Hernandez de Biedma, and in De Soto's letter to the magistrates of Santiago, he is called Hurripacuxi. We follow the Inca.

cross-bows and bucklers. He was accompanied by Ortiz, as guide and interpreter. On approaching the village of Mucozo, the cacique came forth to receive them, and entertained them for the night with great hospitality. On the following morning the captain demanded of him a guide to the village of Urribarracaxi. The cacique at first thought their designs upon the village were hostile, and shrank with noble spirit from what would have been an act of perfidy against his relative and neighbor. When he found, however, that they were on a friendly errand, and only wanted one of his vassals as a precursor, to go before and inform Urribarracaxi of their amicable intentions, he gladly furnished them with an Indian for the purpose, who had been a fast friend of Juan Ortiz.

In their march thus far into the interior they had been occasionally impeded by morasses, which, however, became less frequent the farther they went from the sea. They observed many trees similar to those of Spain, such as walnut, oak, mulberry, plum, pine, and evergreen oak. There were wild grapes also in abundance.

The distance from the village of Mucozo to that of his brother-in-law was about seventeen leagues. They arrived there in four days, but found it deserted, the inhabitants having fled to the woods. They sent their envoy repeatedly to the cacique, with the most friendly messages, but every effort to draw him from his retreat proved fruitless, though he manifested no hostility in word or deed. Gallegos made diligent inquiry of the Indians they met with as to any province where gold and silver were to be found. They replied that there was a country to the westward called Ocali, the inhabitants of which were continually

at war with the people of another province, in which the Spring lasted all the year long, and gold was so plenty that their warriors wore head-pieces of that precious metal.*

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 10.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EXPEDITION OF THE VETERAN VASCO PORCALLO IN QUEST OF THE CACIQUE HIRRIHIGUA, AND HOW HE FARED IN A SWAMP.

1539.

After Hernando de Soto had dispatched Gallegos on his exploring expedition, he received intelligence that the cacique Hirrihigua was concealed in a forest at no great distance from the camp. He was about to send a captain with an armed force in quest of him, when the enterprise was claimed by the lieutenant-general, Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. This brave old cavalier had a passion for military exploit, and was, withal, a little vainglorious. He thought this a fitting opportunity to signalize himself, and insisted upon having the honor of capturing this fugitive, yet formidable cacique. The enterprise being granted to him, he prepared for it in his usual style; for he was fond of parade, and generous in all his appointments. Having selected a band of horsemen and foot-soldiers, he put himself at their head and sallied forth from the camp, well mounted, and cased in glittering armor, vaunting that he would bring home Hirrihigua either a prisoner or a friend.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. i. L. ii. c. 9. Herrera. Hist. Ind., Decad. vi. L. vii. c. 10.

He had not proceeded far, however, when he was met by an Indian messenger, sent by Hirrihigua, who had received intelligence by his spies of the armed force marching in quest of him. The messenger entreated Vasco Porcallo on the part of Hirrihigua, not to proceed any further, as the cacique was in so secure a fortress that, with all his exertions, he could not get to him; whereas he and his troops would be exposed to infinite perils from the rivers, morasses, and tangled forests, which he would have to pass. The cacique added, that he gave this advice, not through any fear for himself, but in consequence of the forbearance manifested by the Spaniards, in not injuring his territory, or his subjects.

Vasco Porcallo listened to the messenger with incredulity; persuading himself that fear, not gratitude nor courtesy, dictated the message; so he ordered the trumpet to sound, and marched on. As he advanced, messenger after messenger encountered him, all repeating the warning to return, and they at length became so frequent as almost to overtake each other. The more, however, he was warned to return, the more obstinately did the stout-hearted and hot-headed cavalier persist in advancing; taking every thing by contrary, and judging of the panic of the cacique by the frequency of his messages. His only fear was that the prize might take to flight, and escape him. He spurred on hotly, therefore, with his troops, until they arrived at a vast and dismal morass.

Here his men, perceiving the truth of the warnings, remonstrated about the difficulty and danger of attempting this morass. Vasco Porcallo, however, had put himself too much on his mettle to be easily daunted. He insisted upon their entering; but, being an old soldier, he knew the effect, in time of difficulty, of set-

ting an example; so, putting spurs to his horse, he dashed forward, and his men followed him pell-mell into the morass. Vasco Porcallo had not proceeded far, however, when, coming to a deep miry place, his horse floundered and fell. The peril of the lieutenant-general was imminent; the horse had fallen upon one of his legs so as to pin him down, while the weight of his armor contributed to sink him in the mire. Both horse and rider were in danger of suffocation; nor could any one come to their aid, being in a perfect quagmire, where all who entered would be exposed to like peril.

At length, with infinite difficulty, the worthy cavalier extricated himself and his steed from this dismal bog, and landed once more on firm ground, covered with mud and mire. All his vainglory was at an end, he was out of humor with himself, and felt mortified in the sight of his soldiers. The savage whom he had come to fight and capture, instead of encountering him with deadly weapons, had conquered him by courteous and friendly messages, and his vainglorious enterprise had ended in a struggle in a quagmire.

Ordering his men to face about, he set out on his return to camp, in far different mood from that in which he had sallied forth. Amidst the mortifications of his present plight, he called to mind his pleasant and comfortable home at Cuba, and the easy and luxurious life he had led there. He reflected that he was no longer a boy; that the vigor of his days was past; that his present disaster was but a slight foretaste of the toils and troubles that must attend this conquering expedition; that he was not obliged to encounter them, but had better return to his home, and leave the conquest of Florida for the young hotheads who were embarked in it.

Revolving these and similar thoughts in his mind, the worthy old cavalier, all bedabbled and bemired, and totally crest-fallen, rode along in crusty and querulous yet half-whimsical humor, muttering his fancies to himself, and ejaculating, in a broken manner, the hard Indian names, with an occasional curse upon them for their ruggedness. "Hurri-harri! Hurri-higa! Burracoxa! Hurri-harri—the devil take a country where the great men have such infamous names! A fine commencement this! promising omens of future luck! Glorious middles and ends to be augured from such beginnings!—Well, let those work for food and fame who are in need of them. For my part, I have riches and honor enough to last for the rest of my life, and to leave behind me."

In this moody way the worthy Vasco Porcallo arrived at the camp. All his dreams of conquest were at an end. The martial fire caught from the young sparks of the army, which had blazed up so suddenly in his bosom, was as suddenly extinguished. His only thought now was, how to get rid of his command of lieutenant-general, and to get safe back to his comfortable home in Cuba. With these views he presented himself at once before De Soto, and, stating his reasons with honest force and hearty sincerity, applied for permission to resign. The governor granted it with the same promptness and grace with which he had accepted his offer to join the enterprise, and moreover furnished him with the galliot San Anton, to convoy him to the island.

The worthy veteran now set to work as eagerly to get out of the expedition as he had done to enter upon it. His train of servants, Spanish, Indian, and negro, were embarked with all speed; but when the gallant old cavalier came to take leave of

his young companions in arms, and the soldiers he had lately aspired to lead so vaingloriously, his magnificent spirit broke forth. He made gifts to the right and left, dividing among the officers and knights all the arms, accoutrements, horses, and camp equipage with which he had come so lavishly and ostentatiously provided, and gave for the use of the army all the ample store of provisions and munitions brought for the use of himself and his retinue. This done, he bade farewell to campaigning, and set sail for Cuba, much to the regret of the army, who lamented that so galliard a spirit should have burnt out so soon.

The only one that remained behind of the train of Vasco Porcallo, was his natural son, named Gomez Suarez de Figueroa, whom he had by an Indian woman in Cuba, and with whom he left two horses and arms, and other necessaries. This youth, throughout this expedition, conducted himself as a good knight and soldier, and a worthy son of such a father, serving with great promptitude on all occasions.*

* The Inca P. i. L. ii. c. 11.

CHAPTER XII.

DE SOTO LEAVES PEDRO CALDERON WITH A GARRISON IN HIRRIHIGUA, AND SETS OUT ON HIS MARCH INTO THE INTERIOR—THE DIFFICULTIES HE ENCOUNTERED—GONZALO SILVESTRE SENT BACK WITH A MESSAGE TO CALDERON.

1539.

On the day after the departure of Vasco Porcallo, a young cavalier named Gonzalo Silvestre, followed by three other horsemen, rode into the camp, sent by Baltazar de Gallegos. They brought favorable accounts from Gallegos of the country he had explored, and assurances that in the village of Urribarracaxi and its neighborhood were provisions enough to sustain the army for several days.

One drawback on their favorable intelligence was, that beyond the town of Urrabarracaxi extended a vast and dismal swamp, exceedingly difficult to be traversed. The Spaniards, however, who were all alert for action and adventure, made light of this obstacle, averring that God had given man genius and dexterity with which to make his way through every difficulty.

Satisfied from the relation given by these men that he might readily penetrate into the interior, the governor issued orders for every one to prepare to march on the fourth day. In the mean time he dispatched Gonzalo Silvestre, with twenty horse-

men, to notify Baltazar de Gallegos of his intended march to join him.

As there was a great quantity of arms, ammunition, and provisions in the village of Hirrihigua, he left a garrison there of forty horsemen and eighty foot-soldiers, with Pedro Calderon as captain; who had command also of the shipping in the harbor, consisting of a caravel and two brigantines with their crews.

They were enjoined to remain quiet, and not to move to any other place without orders from De Soto: they were, moreover, to cultivate peace with the surrounding Indians; not to make war upon them, even though they were taunted and insulted; and, above all, to treat Mucozo with marked friendship.

Having made all these arrangements, and trusting, as well he might, in Pedro Calderon as a good soldier and discreet captain, De Soto set out on the appointed day, with his main force, from the Bay of Espiritu Santo and the village of Hirrihigua. It was an arduous and difficult task to conduct such a body of troops, encumbered with armor and with all kinds of baggage and supplies, through a wilderness, exposed to hardships and dangers, and a wild kind of warfare, to all which most of them were entirely unaccustomed.

As a leading object with the governor, also, was to found a colony, he was encumbered with many things that embarrassed the march of his army. Among these are particularly noted three hundred swine, with which he intended to stock the country when he should settle, having been found the most advantageous stock for the sustenance of new colonies. These animals were placed in charge of a company of horse, to keep them to the line of march, and guard them in traversing the swamps and rivers.

Besides the matchlocks and cross-bows with which the infan

try were armed, there was one piece of ordnance in the army, the transportation of which must have cost vast labor, while it appears never to have rendered any efficient service.

After two days' march, always to the northeast, De Soto, on the morning of the third day, came in sight of the village of Mucozo.* The cacique came forth to receive him, expressing great grief at his intended departure from the country, and entreating him to remain that night in his village. The governor, however, excused himself, not wishing to task his hospitality with such a multitude of guests. He again expressed his thanks for the kindness shown to Juan Ortiz, and commended to his friendship and good offices the captain and soldiers who remained in garrison in the village of Hirrihigua. The cacique promised to observe towards them the strictest amity. He then took leave of the governor and his principal officers and cavaliers, with many embraces and apparently sincere tears, praying that the sun might shine upon them throughout their journey, and prosper them in all their undertakings. The Spaniards, themselves, were greatly affected at parting with this generous savage, who had in all things proved himself so true and noble a friend.

On arriving at the village of Urribarracaxi,† De Soto found Baltazar de Gallegos waiting to receive him. The cacique, however, was still absent, remaining in the fastnesses of the forest, and though the governor sent envoys with offers of peace and amity, nothing could draw him forth from his place of refuge.

* Called now Hichipuchsassa.

† Mr. Fairbanks thinks this village was in the hammocks, near the head of the Hillsborough river, and remarks, that the Indians always made their settlements in the vicinity of the hammocks for purposes of cultivation, as the best lands are always found there.

A grand obstacle now lay in the way by which the Spaniards were to proceed. About three leagues from the village extended a great morass a league in width, two thirds mire and one third water, and very deep at the borders. Runners were sent forth in three different directions to discover a pass, which they succeeded in doing after several days' search. By this pass the army crossed with ease, although it took a whole day to do so.

They now arrived on a broad plain, and sent the runners ahead to explore their route. The latter returned the next day, declaring that they could not proceed farther on account of the many bogs made by streams which ran out of the great morass and inundated the country. Upon this the governor determined to seek a road himself. Choosing, therefore, one hundred horse and as many foot-soldiers, he left the rest of the army encamped with the camp master-general, Luis de Moscoso, and recrossing the great swamp, travelled three days along one side of it, sending runners, at different distances, to seek for some outlet.

During the three days, Indians incessantly sallied forth from the woods which skirted the swamp, discharging their arrows at the Spaniards and retreating to their thickets. Some, however, were killed and others taken prisoners. The latter were used as guides, but they led the troops into difficult passes, and places where Indians were lurking in ambush. Discovering their perfidy, the Spaniards let loose the dogs, who killed four of them. Upon this, an Indian, fearing a similar fate, offered to guide them surely, and accordingly, after a wide circuit, brought them to a place free from mire, but where they had to proceed for the distance of a league breast-high in water, until they came to the mid-channel, where, for a hundred yards, it was too deep to be forded. Here the Indians had constructed a rude bridge, by felling two

large trees into the water; and, where they did not unite, the space was supplied by logs tied to each other, with poles across them. By this same bridge Pamphilo de Narvaez had passed, ten years before, with his unfortunate army.

Hernando de Soto, well pleased to have found this bridge, summoned two soldiers, half-breeds of the Island of Cuba, named Pedro Moron and Diego de Oliva, who were expert swimmers, and ordered them to take hatchets and cut away several branches which obstructed the passage of the bridge, and clear away all other impediments.

The two soldiers set to work with all diligence, but in the midst of their labor, several canoes with Indians darted forth from among the rushes, and galled the workmen by a flight of arrows. The two half breeds plunged from the bridge, swam under the water and came up near their comrades. They were but slightly wounded, for being under the surface of the water the force of the arrows was broken, and they did not penetrate deeply. After this sudden onset the Indians retired. The Spaniards repaired the bridge without being again molested, and at a short distance above they discovered a very good pass for the horses.

Having thus succeeded in the object of his search, the governor called to him Gonzalo Silvestre, one of the most hardy and spirited of his youthful cavaliers, and the best mounted of his troop. "To your lot," said he, "has fallen the best horse in the army, and the more work you will have in consequence, for we have to assign to you the most difficult tasks that occur. Return this night to the camp, and tell Luis de Moscoso to follow us with the army; and to dispatch you ahead with provisions for our immediate supply. That you may return with more safety than you go, tell him to give you thirty lances as an escort. I

will wait for you in this same place until to-morrow night. The road may seem long and difficult, and the time short, but I know to whom I intrust the undertaking. That you may not go alone take with you the companion you like best, and be off at once, for you should pass the swamp before daybreak lest the Indians capture and kill you."

The very peril of the mission put the youthful Silvestre upon his mettle. Without answering a word, he left the governor, vaulted in his saddle, and was already on the way when he encountered another youth, named Juan Lopez Cacho, native of Seville, and page of the governor, who had an excellent horse. "Juan Lopez," cried Silvestre, "the general has ordered that you and I go with a message to be delivered before daybreak at the camp; follow me, therefore, immediately, for I am already on the road."

"Take some other person, I entreat you," said Juan Lopez. "I am fatigued, and cannot make the journey."

"As you please," replied Silvestre, "the governor ordered me to choose a companion, and I have chosen you. If you are so disposed, come and welcome; if not, remain. Your company will not diminish the danger, nor will my going alone increase the toil." So saying, he continued on his way. Juan Lopez, much as it went against his will, leaped into his saddle and galloped after him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PERILOUS JOURNEY OF GONZALO SILVESTRE, AND HIS FRIEND JUAN LOPEZ.

1539.

The sun was just setting as Gonzalo Silvestre and his comrade departed on their hazardous mission. These youthful cavaliers were well matched in spirit, hardihood, and sprightly valor; and neither had attained his twenty-first year.

They passed rapidly over the first four or five leagues, the road being clear, free from forests, swamps, or streams. In all that distance they did not perceive a single Indian. Having crossed this open tract, their dangers and difficulties began; for, being ignorant of the country, they were obliged to trace back, step by step, the track they had made three days previous, through bog and brake, brambles and forest, and across a labyrinth of streams meandering from the great morass; guiding themselves by the land-marks noticed on their previous march. In this toilsome twilight journey, they were aided by the instinct of the horses. These sagacious animals, as if possessed of understanding, traced the road by which they had come, and like spaniels or setter dogs, thrust their noses along the ground to discover the track. Their riders did not at first understand their intention, and checked them with the reins to raise their heads. Did they at any time lose the track, on finding it again

the steeds would puff and snort, which alarmed their masters, who dreaded being overheard by the savages.*

Gonzalo Silvestre, comprehending at length the intention of his horse when he lowered his head to seek the track, gave him his will, without attempting to guide him. Encountering these difficulties, and many others more easily to be imagined than written, these two daring youths travelled all night, without any road, half dead with hunger, worn out with excessive fatigue, and almost overcome by sleep. Their horses were in no better plight, as for three days they had not been unsaddled, the bits being merely taken from their mouths occasionally, that they might graze.

At times they passed within sight of huge fires, around which the savages were stretched in wild and fantastic groups, or capering and singing, and making the forests ring with yells and howlings. These were probably celebrating their feasts with war dances. The deafening din they raised was the safeguard of the two Spaniards, as it prevented the savages noticing the clamorous barking of their dogs, and hearing the trampling of the horses as they passed.†

* The Inca is curiously minute in his account of these horses. The steed of Gonzalo Silvestre, says he, was the most sure in the track, and certain to discover it when lost. However, he adds, we must not be surprised at this excellent quality, and many others that this horse possessed; for, his marks and color proved him admirably fitted either for peace or war. He was of a dark chestnut of a pitchy shade, with white on one of his left feet, and striped above the nostrils, marks which promise more excellence and gentleness than any other. The dark chestnut color, especially when of a pitchy hue, is above all others the most excellent, either for light or heavy labor. The steed of Juan Lopez Cachero was of a light bay, commonly called fox-color, and his extremities were black, excellent marks, but inferior to the dark chestnut color. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. i. L. ii. c. 14.

† The Inca, P. i. Lib. ii. c. 14.

Thus they journeyed for more than ten leagues. Juan Lopez was repeatedly so much overpowered by sleep, that he entreated they should halt and repose, but Silvestre resolutely refused. At length poor Lopez could contain himself no longer. "Let me sleep for a short time," said he, "or kill me with your lance on the spot, for I cannot possibly go on any farther, or keep my saddle."

"Dismount then, and sleep if you please," said Silvestre, "since you had rather run the risk of being butchered than bear up an hour longer. According to the distance we have come, we must be near the pass of the morass, and cross it we must before dawn; for if day finds us in this place our death is certain."

Juan Lopez made no reply, but let himself fall upon the ground like a lifeless body. His companion took from him his lance, and held his horse by the bridle. Night now rapidly drew on—the clouds poured forth a deluge of rain, but nothing could awaken Juan Lopez from his deep and death-like slumber.

As the rain ceased, the clouds dispersed and Silvestre declared that he found himself suddenly in broad daylight, without having perceived it dawn; it is probable that he had been unconsciously sleeping in his saddle. Startled at beholding the day so near, he hastened to call Lopez, but finding that the low tones in which he spoke were insufficient, he made use of his lance, and gave him some hearty blows, calling out, "Look what your sleeping has brought upon us: see, the daylight which we dreaded has overtaken us, and we have now no escape from our enemies!"

Juan Lopez, roused at last by this summary process, sprang

into his saddle, and they set off at a handgallop. Fortunately for them, the horses were of such bottom, that notwithstanding past fatigue, they were yet in spirit. The light revealed the two cavaliers to the Indians, who set up yells and howlings, that seemed to arise from every part of the morass, accompanied by a frightful din, and clangor of drums, trumpets, conches, and other rude instruments of warlike music.

A perilous league remained to be made, over an expanse of water, which the horses would have to ford. Before the Spaniards reached it, they beheld canoes darting forth from among thickets and cane-breaks, until the water seemed covered with them. They saw the imminent danger that awaited them in the water, after passing so many on land; but, knowing that in courage alone consisted their safety, they dashed into it; seeking to pass it with all speed. Throughout the whole league, they were beset by Indians, who were discharging arrows at them. Fortunately they were cased in armor, and their horses were nearly covered with the water, so that they both escaped without wounds, though the cavaliers declared that, on reaching land, and looking back, the whole surface of the water seemed strewed with arrows.

The Indians continued to pursue them on land, plying their bows, and speeding flights of arrows, when a band of thirty horsemen came galloping to the rescue, headed by Nuño Tobar, on his famous dapple-gray charger. The wild cries and yells of the Indians having reached the army, had caused a surmise that some Spaniards were in danger, and Nuño Tobar had proposed this sally to their rescue; for that cavalier, now that he was out of favor with his general, seemed, with the pride of a

noble spirit to pique himself the more on signalizing himself by worthy deeds.

At sight of Nuño Tobar and his band, the Indians gave over the pursuit, and retreated into the thickets and morass.

CHAPTER XIV.

THIRTY LANCES SALLY FORTH WITH SUPPLIES FOR THE GOVERNOR —THE HAUGHTY SPEECH OF THE CACIQUE ACUERA.

1539.

The two adventurous troopers reached the army in safety, and were received with acclamations. On learning their errand, Luis de Moscoso, the camp-master-general, immediately ordered two horses to be laden with supplies for the governor and his troops, and thirty horsemen as an escort. With this band Gonzalo Silvestre set out on his return, without having reposed an hour in the camp, and having scarcely taken any refreshment. His friend, Juan Lopez, remained behind, excusing himself under the plea that the governor had neither ordered him to go nor return.

The thirty horse passed the morass without opposition, and travelled all day without seeing an enemy. With all their speed they could not arrive at the place at which the governor had promised to await them, until two hours after nightfall, when, to their great chagrin, they found the late camping-ground deserted. Ignorant of the route taken by the general, the little band made arrangements for passing the night in this perilous situation. Being exposed to the attacks of lurking savages,

constant vigilance was necessary. They divided their party, therefore, into three bands of ten men each. One, mounted and armed, went the rounds the first third of the night; another band kept watch at the encampment, with their horses saddled and bridled, and ready to be mounted. The third merely took the bridles off their steeds, and, suffering the saddles to remain on, turned the horses loose to graze while they snatched a brief repose. In this manner, going the rounds, watching and sleeping by turns, they lightened their toils, and the night passed away without molestation.

As soon as the day dawned they sought the track of the general and his troop, and following it, came to the second pass of the morass with the Indian bridge. Here, having to advance for a great distance breast-high in water, they feared an attack, for the Indians might hover about them in canoes, and assail them with flights of arrows: to their great joy, however, they accomplished the whole passage without any assault. This capricious conduct of the savages—one day attacking with bloodthirsty fury, and the next keeping entirely out of sight—occurred repeatedly throughout the whole of this expedition, and has been sometimes attributed to superstitious notions and observances in their warfare.

Having travelled six leagues, the convoy came to a beautiful valley, in which were large fields of Indian corn, of such luxuriant growth as to bear three and four ears upon a stalk. The horsemen leaned down and plucked them as they rode along, eating them raw to appease their hunger. In this valley they found the governor encamped, who received them joyfully, lavishing praises upon Silvestre for his courage and hardihood, and promising to reward him for his services. He excused himself

for not having waited at the appointed place, by alleging the intolerable hunger of the troops, and their doubts whether Silvestre had not fallen into the hands of the Indians.

Within a few days the governor was joined by the residue of the army, conducted by Luis de Moscoso. They had traversed the two passes of the morass with great toil and difficulty, but fortunately without any hostility on the part of the natives.

The fertile province in which the army was encamped,* was twenty leagues to the north of that of Urribarracaxi, and was ruled by a cacique named Acuera, who, on the approach of the Spaniards, had fled with his people to the woods. Hernando de Soto sent Indian interpreters to him, representing the power of the Spaniards to do injury or confer benefits; their disposition to befriend the natives; and that their only object was, by amicable means, to bring the people of this great country into obedience to their sovereign, the powerful emperor and king of Castile. He invited the cacique, therefore, to a friendly interview.

The cacique returned a haughty and vaunting reply. "Others of your accursed race," said he, "have in years past poisoned our peaceful shores. They have taught me what you are. What is your employment? To wander about like vagabonds from land to land—to rob the poor—to betray the confiding—to murder in cold blood the defenceless. No, with such a people I want no peace, no friendship. War—never ending—exterminating war, is all the boon I ask. You boast yourselves valiant—and so you may be—but my faithful warriors are not less brave—and this, too, you shall one day prove, for I have sworn

* Supposed to be the place known now as the old Indian Palaklikaha.

to maintain an unsparing conflict while one white man remains in my borders. Not openly in battle—though even thus we fear not to meet you—but by stratagem, and ambush, and midnight surprisal."

In reply to the demand that he should yield obedience to the emperor, he replied: "I am king in my own land, and will never become the vassal of a mortal like myself. Vile and pusillanimous is he who will submit to the yoke of another, when he may be free! As for me and my people, we choose death, yes, a hundred deaths, before the loss of our liberty, and the subjugation of our country!"

The governor admired the pride and haughtiness of spirit of the savage chieftain, and was more pressing than ever to gain his friendship; but to all his messages and overtures the answer of the cacique was, that he had already made the only reply he had to offer.

In this province the army remained twenty days, recruiting from the fatigue and privation of the past journey. During this time the governor sent persons in every direction to explore the country, who returned with favorable reports.

The Indians, during this time, were not asleep nor idle. To fulfil the bravadoes of their cacique, they lurked in ambush about the camp, so that a Spaniard could not stray a hundred steps from it without being shot down and instantly beheaded; so that if his companions hastened to his rescue, they found nothing but a headless trunk.

The Christians buried the dead bodies of their unfortunate comrades whenever they found them, but the Indians would return the following night, disinter them, cut them up and hang them upon the trees. The heads they carried as trophies to

their cacique, according to his orders. Thus fourteen Spaniards perished, and a greater number were wounded. The savages in these skirmishes ran comparatively but little risk, as the Spanish encampment was skirted by a thicket, whither the Indians, after making an assault, could easily escape. In this manner the Spaniards saw effectually verified the threats which had been shouted forth by the Indians who had hung upon the rear during the march. "Keep on, robbers and traitors," cried they, "in Acuera and Apalachee we will treat you as you deserve. Every captive will we quarter and hang up on the highest trees along the road."

Notwithstanding their great vigilance during all this time, the Spaniards did not kill more than fifty Indians, for they were most prudent and wary in their waylayings.*

* The Inca, P. i. L. ii. c. 16. Herrera. D. vi. L. vii. c. 10.

Note.—The conduct and language of the cacique Acuera are completely in the spirit manifested by some of the chiefs of the late war; the mode of warfare was also of a similar kind.

CHAPTER XV.

THE GOVERNOR ARRIVES IN THE PROVINCE OF OCALI—OCCURRENCES THERE.

1539.

The army reposed for twenty days in the province of Acuera, during which time De Soto permitted no injury to be done either to the hamlets and villages, or the fields of grain: they then broke up their encampment, and set out for another province, about twenty leagues to the north-eastward, called Ocali,* the same of which Gallegos had heard at the village of Urribarracaxi. Their way lay across a desert tract, about twelve leagues broad, interspersed with open forests, free from underwood, through which the horsemen could ride at ease. They then traversed seven leagues, where dwellings were scattered about the fields and forests. At length they arrived at the principal village, containing six hundred houses, called after the cacique Ocali. The inhabitants, however, had fled with their effects to the forests.

This province, being further from the sea-coast, was less cut up and intersected by the deep creeks and bays, which in other

* This name is spelt Cale by the Portuguese Narrator. It is supposed to have been in the neighborhood of Fort King.

parts penetrated an immense distance into this low and level country, causing vast swamps and bogs, difficult and sometimes impossible to be passed. In some of the morasses they had traversed the surface would appear like firm land, yet, on stepping upon it, would tremble for twenty or thirty paces around, and on being trodden by horses would give way, and plunge steed and rider into a suffocating quagmire.

Besides being more free from morasses, the province of Ocali was more populous and fruitful; and this the Spaniards found to be the case, throughout this country, in proportion as the provinces were remote from the sea. What they chiefly suffered from throughout this whole expedition, was scarcity of animal food, as the natives did not raise domestic cattle; and, although deer and other game were abundant, the Indians only killed sufficient to supply their immediate wants.

The Spaniards took up their quarters in the village of Ocali, where they found vast quantities of maize, vegetables, and various kinds of fruits. The governor sent three or four Indian messengers daily to the cacique Ocali, endeavoring, but in vain, to draw that chieftain from his retreat, with proffers of peace and friendship. With one of these messengers, came to the camp four young Indian warriors, gayly decorated with plumes, who manifested an eager curiosity to see the Spaniards, wondering at their dress, their arms, and, above all, their horses. The governor gave them presents, and ordered that a collation should be set before them.

They sat down and appeared to be eating very quietly, when, perceiving the Spaniards to be off their guard, they rose suddenly, and ran full speed to the woods. It was in vain for the Spaniards to pursue them on foot, and there was no horse at hand.

A hound of uncommon sagacity, however, hearing the cry of the Indians, and seeing them run, pursued them. Overtaking and passing by the first, and second, and third, he sprang upon the shoulders of the foremost and pulled him to the ground; as the next Indian passed on, the dog, leaving the one already down, sprang upon his successor, and secured him in the same way. In like manner he served the third and fourth; and then kept running from one to the other, pulling them down as fast as they rose, and barking so furiously, that the Indians were terrified and confounded, and the Spaniards were enabled to overtake and capture them They were taken back to the camp and examined separately, for, as they were armed, the Spaniards apprehended some treachery; but it appeared that their sudden flight was only by way of exploit to show their address and fleetness.

This same hound had signalized himself on another occasion before the army reached Ocali. As several Indians and Spaniards were talking in a friendly way on the bank of a river, one of the Indians struck a Spaniard violently with his bow, and threw himself into the water, all his companions following him. The dog immediately sprang in after them, but passed by several of the Indians without molesting them until he came to the one who had committed the assault, when, laying hold of him, he tore him to pieces.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FATE OF THE HOUND.

1539.

After repeated solicitations, the cacique Ocali, at the end of six days, ventured from his place of refuge, and visited the army, where he was well treated, although the Spaniards doubted much the sincerity of his professions.

Hard by the village ran a wide and deep river, with precipitous banks. Notwithstanding it was the summer season, this river was too full of water to be fordable; it was necessary, therefore, to construct a wooden bridge for the army to pass. De Soto having treated with the cacique for a number of his subjects to aid in its construction, they went forth one day to decide upon the spot where it should be erected. As they were walking along the bank, conferring on the subject, more than five hundred Indians started up from among bushes and thickets, on the opposite bank of the river, crying, "You want a bridge, do you? merciless robbers! but you will never see it built by our hands!" Thus shouting, they let fly a volley of arrows towards the place where the cacique and governor were standing.

De Soto demanded of his savage companion the meaning of this outrage, seeing he had given him pledges of his friendship

The cacique replied, that these were of a refractory party of his subjects, who had cast off allegiance to him on account of his attachment to the Spaniards, and that he was not therefore answerable for their acts.

It happened that the hound already mentioned was at hand, held in a leash by the governor's page. No sooner did he hear the yells and see the menacing actions of the Indians, than he was furious to get at them. In his struggles he drew the page along, threw him on the ground, and then breaking loose, plunged into the stream. The Spaniards called him back in vain. The Indians, knowing his valor and exploits, and the harm he had done to their countrymen, were glad of an opportunity to revenge themselves. They showered their arrows about him as he swam, and with such dexterous aim, that more than fifty struck him about the head and shoulders, which were above the water. Still the courageous animal kept on, and reached the land, but had scarcely left the water when he fell dead. His death was lamented by the governor and the army, as if it had been that of a brave warrior: for he had been of signal service throughout the expedition, a vigilant guardian of the camp by night, and a fierce champion by day. He was one of a rare and renowned race of dogs, several of which were noted for their feats in the course of the Spanish discoveries and conquests.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SPANIARDS ENTER THE VAST PROVINCE OF VITACHUCO—THEIR RECEPTION THERE.

1539.

De Soto saw that the chieftain Ocali was but lightly esteemed by his subjects, who disobeyed his commands with impunity; and, thinking that the neighboring caciques might suppose he was detained against his will, gave him permission to go to his people, and revisit the camp whenever it pleased him. The cacique gladly availed himself of this offer, but declared he only went in order to bring his subjects into more perfect submission to the governor, which accomplished, he would joyfully rejoin the Spaniards. With these and many similar professions, he departed; but never again showed his face in the camp.

Upon the departure of the cacique, the Spaniards commenced constructing a bridge over the river. The work was superintended by one Francisco, a Genoese, the only shipwright in the army. He was likewise skilled in every kind of carpentering work, and by his art rendered incalculable services to the Spaniards throughout this expedition. Large planks were thrown upon the water, and these tied together with strong cords, which they had brought with them for such emergencies; crossing and fastening the planks with immense poles laid on top. It was of

sufficient strength for the passage of both men and horses. Having captured thirty Indians to serve as guides, the Spaniards crossed the bridge, and set forward on their march.

After travelling about three days, the governor threw himself in the advance of the army, with a hundred horse, and a hundred foot; and, pushing forward in the night, came by daybreak to the frontiers of a province, fifty leagues in breadth, called Vitachuco. It was under the dominion of three brothers. The eldest, Vitachuco, bearing the name of the country over which he ruled, had five parts out of ten, the second brother governed three of the remaining five, and the youngest of the family, who was chief of the village of Ochile, and of the same name, possessed the residue. This was contrary to the usage of the other provinces through which the Spaniards had passed, in which the eldest son inherited all.

It was scarce daybreak on the first day, when the governor and his advanced corps arrived at the village of Ochile.* It contained fifty large and strong dwellings, being a frontier post, fortified against the adjacent provinces, with which it appeared this country was embroiled in warfare.

De Soto and his little band rushed into the village, with clamor of drum and trumpet; seized the Indians, as, terrified and amazed, they came forth from their houses, and surrounded the mansion of the cacique. This was built in form of one large pavilion upwards of a hundred and twenty paces in length, and forty in breadth, with four doors; a number of smaller buildings were connected with it like offices.

The cacique had with him a guard of his principal warriors,

* Williams says, this must have been south of the Allachua prairie. See *Williams's Florida.*

and many others had hastened to his defence. He would have sallied forth and made battle, but the Spaniards had possession of the doors, and threatened to fire the house. At length, by sunrise, he was persuaded, through the mediation of Indian prisoners and interpreters, to yield to the superior power of the Spaniards, and accept their proffered friendship. The governor received him kindly, but kept him with him, while he set at liberty all the other prisoners, ordering his soldiers to treat them in the most friendly manner.

The governor, however, did not feel himself secure. The neighborhood was populous; the Indians, seeing the small number of his band, might attempt a rescue of their cacique. Taking that chieftain with him, therefore, and a number of warriors who adhered to his fortunes, the governor marched out of the village, and returned in quest of the main body of his troops, whom he found encamped at three leagues distance, full of anxiety on account of his absence.

The day following, the army entered Ochile; the foot and horse formed into squadrons, and trumpets, fifes, and drums sounding. The troops being quartered, the governor prevailed upon Ochile to send envoys to his two brothers, inviting them to accept the offer of peace of the Spaniards, and warning them of the disastrous consequences that would attend a refusal.

The second brother, who was nearest, readily complied, and at the end of three days came accompanied by many of his warriors gayly decorated. After kissing the hands of the governor, he entered into familiar conversation with the officers and distinguished cavaliers of the army, asking the name of each, and bearing himself with as much ease as if he had been brought up among them.

The elder brother, however, who was much the most powerful of the three, made no reply to the message, but detained the envoys by whom it was sent. The two brothers, by the persuasion of De Soto, sent again other messengers with still more urgent counsel and entreaties. They represented the invincible power of the Spaniards, who were children of the sun and moon, their gods—that they had come from the remote region, where the sun rises, and withal, that they had with them animals called horses, so fleet, courageous, and powerful, that it was impossible to escape them by flight, or resist them by force.

The answer of Vitachuco is given at length by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega; though he quotes it from memory, after a lapse of years; and declares that he cannot vouch for its being arranged exactly in the order in which it was declared, or that it was the whole of what was said; but he pledges his word that, as far as it goes, it is truly the message of the cacique. He declares that if the whole could be written as recounted by the envoys, none of the knights that the divine Ariosto or his predecessor, the illustrious and enamored Count Matheo Maria Boyardo, have introduced in their works, could equal in haughty spirit and extravagant bravado this savage chieftain. Without claiming for it all the praise so liberally awarded by this ancient author, still it shows the fiery spirit of this wild warrior, whose gallant efforts were, alas! of but little avail against the resistless might of the Spanish invader.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HAUGHTY MESSAGE OF THE CACIQUE VITACHUCO.

1539.

"It is evident enough," observes the cacique, in reply to the embassy of his brothers, "that you are young, and have neither judgment nor experience, or you would never speak as you have done of these hated white men! You extol them greatly as virtuous men, who injure no one. You say that they are valiant—that they are children of the sun, and merit all our reverence and service. The vile chains which they have hung upon you, and the mean and dastardly spirit which you have acquired during the short period you have been their slaves, have caused you to speak like women, lauding what you should censure and abhor. You remember not that these strangers can be no better than those who formerly committed so many cruelties in our country. Are they not of the same nation and subject to the same laws? Do not their manner of life and actions prove them to be children of the Spirit of Evil, and not of the sun and the moon, our gods? Go they not from land to land plundering and destroying; taking the wives and daughters of others instead of bringing their own with them; and, like mere vagabonds, maintaining themselves by the laborious toil and

sweating brow of others? Were they virtuous, as you represent, they never would have left their own country, since there they might have practised their virtues, planting and cultivating the earth, maintaining themselves without prejudice to others or injury to themselves; instead of roving about the world committing robberies and murders, having neither the shame of men nor the fear of God before them.

"Warn them not to enter into my dominions, for I vow that, as valiant as they may be, if they dare to put foot upon my soil, they shall never go out of my land alive—the whole race will I exterminate!"*

This was the first reply of Vitachuco; but he sent many others, insomuch that every day there arrived two or three Indians, sounding always a trumpet, and bringing greater bravadoes and menaces than the last. The cacique thought to terrify them by the various and hideous supernatural deaths with which he menaced them. At one time he threatened, that the moment they entered his province the earth should open and swallow them; that the hills by which the Spaniards would have to travel should join together and bury them alive. Again, the trees of the forest through which they had to pass were to be blown down and crush them; flights of birds were to hover over and pounce upon them, with corroding poison in their beaks. And again, that he would have the waters, herbs, trees, and even the air poisoned in such manner that neither horse nor rider, man nor beast, could escape with life.

These extravagancies provoked the laughter of the Spaniards, who considered them the bravadoes of a vaporing spirit; but the deeds of the cacique afterwards showed that they were the

* The Inca, P. i. L. ii. c. 21.

wishes and conceptions of a proud warrior; who, it is probable, was promised all these miracles in his favor by some Indian prophet.

These and many other messages arrived during eight days that were spent by the governor in travelling about the domains of the two brothers, who did every thing in their power to gratify the Spaniards. At length the two brothers themselves departed on a mission to Vitachuco. The fierce chieftain pretended to be at length won by their persuasions, and agreed to enter into friendly intercourse with the strangers; but he wished first to know how many days they would be in his domains, what quantity of provisions they would require when they departed, and what other things would be necessary for their journey.

The two brothers sent an envoy to De Soto with this message, who replied, that they would not sojourn in the territory of Vitachuco longer than he desired them to remain, nor did they wish any more provisions than he saw fit to give them, neither had they need of any thing besides his friendship.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CACIQUE VITACHUCO DISSEMBLES—HIS PLOT TO DESTROY THE SPANIARDS.

1539.

Vitachuco pretended to be well contented with the reply of the governor, a day was appointed for their meeting, and the cacique ordered an abundant supply of provisions for the troops and horses to be brought from all parts of his domains, and deposited in the chief village.

On the appointed day he went forth from his village, accompanied by his two brothers and five hundred Indian warriors, all graceful men, adorned with plumes of various colors, and armed with bows and arrows of the finest workmanship. At the distance of two leagues they found the governor, encamped with his army in a beautiful valley.

Their meeting was cordial, and the cacique endeavored to atone for past threats and menaces, by professions of present amity and promises of future services and allegiance, all which were graciously received by De Soto.

Vitachuco was about thirty-five years of age, of very good stature, and strongly formed, as the Indians of Florida generally were, and evinced in his countenance the bravery of his spirit.

The ensuing day the Spaniards entered in order of battle,

into the principal village, bearing the same name as the cacique.* It consisted of two hundred houses, large and strong, besides many others of smaller size in the suburbs. The governor and his body-guards and servants, together with the three brother caciques, lodged in the house of Vitachuco, as it was of ample size to accommodate them all.

Two days were passed in feasting and rejoicing. On the third day, the two brothers of Vitachuco obtained leave to return to their respective territories, and departed, well pleased with the good treatment and the many presents they had received from the Spaniards.

After their departure, Vitachuco redoubled his courtesy and kindness to the Spaniards, and seemed as if he thought he could not do enough to serve and gratify them. Five days only had elapsed, however, when Juan Ortiz came to the governor, and informed him of a perfidious plot devised by the cacique, and which had been revealed to him by four of the Indian interpreters. He had selected several thousand of his bravest warriors, and ordered them to conceal their weapons in the thicket near the village, and to appear at all times unarmed, so as to throw the Spaniards off their guard. On an appointed day he was to invite the governor to go forth and see a general muster of his subjects, drawn up in battle array, though without weapons, that he might know what a number of Indian allies he had at his command for his future conquests.

Trusting that the governor, from the amity existing between

* Mr. Fairbanks is inclined to fix the site of Vitachuco on what is now known as the Wacahautu prairie, which is partly wet and partly dry, and is about fifteen miles west of Micanopy. He says that in this vicinity are numerous lakes and prairies which might be taken as the scene of the battle.

them, would go forth carelessly and alone, a dozen of the fiercest and most powerful Indians were suddenly to seize him and bear him into the midst of the warriors; who, seizing their arms, were to attack the Spaniards in their camp. In this way, between the suprise of the sudden assault, and the dismay at the capture of their general, he trusted to have an easy conquest: in which case, he intended to make good his extravagant menaces, and inflict on his prisoners all kinds of cruel and tormenting deaths.

The Adelantado having consulted with his captains, it was determined to take Vitachuco in the same way that he intended to take the governor; so that he would thus fall into his own snare. For that purpose, twelve of the stoutest soldiers were selected, to be near the governor at the time he should go forth to view the Indian army, and at a certain signal were to seize upon the cacique. These things being concerted in secret, the Spaniards watched Vitachuco's movements, but at the same time maintained an air of careless unconcern.

The day so much desired having arrived, Vitachuco came to the governor early in the morning, and, with much humility and seeming veneration, begged him to confer a great favor on himself and all his subjects, by going out of the camp to behold them arranged in order of battle, that he might know the number that were at his service, and might see whether the Indians of this country knew how to form their squadrons as well as other nations who he had heard were skilled in the art of war.

The governor replied with an unsuspicious air, that he would rejoice greatly to see them; and that, to make the display more striking, and furnish the Indians likewise with a sight, he would order his horse and foot-soldiers to go out and place themselves in

squadrons; and have a mock fight for each other's entertainment.

The cacique did not much relish this proposition, but agreed to the arrangement; trusting to the number and valor of his vassals to overthrow the Spaniards, be they ever so well prepared.

CHAPTER XX.

BATTLE WITH VITACHUCO.

1539.

All things being arranged, the Spaniards marched forth, horse and foot, in battle array, with glittering arms and fluttering banners. As to the governor, he remained behind, to accompany the cacique on foot, the better to appear unsuspicious of the latent treason. He went, however, secretly armed; and he ordered two of his finest horses to be led forth caparisoned for service. One of these is especially mentioned as a beautiful and noble-spirited animal. He was named Accytuño, after Mateo de Accytuño, a cavalier who had made him a present to the governor.

Near the village was a large plain. It had on one side a dense forest, on the other, two lakes: the one about a league in circumference, clear of trees, but so deep, that three or four feet from the bank no footing could be found. The second, which was at greater distance from the village, was more than half a league in width, and appeared like a vast river, extending as far as the eye could reach. Between the forest and these two lakes, the Indians formed their squadrons, having the lakes on their right flank, and the forest on the left. Their bows and arrows were concealed in the grass, in order that they might appear to be totally unarmed. Their force might be about ten

thousand, chosen warriors, with lofty plumes, which increased their apparent height; and, being drawn out with somewhat of military order, they made a beautiful display.

The cacique and Hernando de Soto came forth on foot, each accompanied by twelve of his people, and each burning with the same spirit and determination against the other. The Spanish troops were to the right of the governor; the infantry drawn up near to the forest, and the cavalry advanced into the plain.

It was between nine and ten of the morning, when De Soto and Vitachuco arrived at the spot, which the latter had fixed upon for the seizure of the governor. Before the cacique, however, could make his preconcerted signal, a Spanish trumpet gave a warning blast.* In an instant the twelve Spaniards rushed upon the cacique. His attendant Indians threw themselves before him, and endeavoured to repel the assailants, but in vain. He was borne off captive.

At the same time, De Soto leaped upon his favorite steed Aceytuño, and spurred him upon the thickest of the enemy, with that headlong valor which always distinguished him in battle. The Indians had already seized their weapons. Their first ranks were thrown into confusion by the impetuous charge of De Soto; but as he pressed forward, a shower of arrows came whistling about him. They were principally aimed at his horse, the Indians always seeking most to kill these animals, knowing their importance in battle. Four of the arrows wounded the generous animal in the knees, four pierced him in the breast, and he fell to the earth dead, as if shot by a piece of artillery.†

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

† Herrera, Decad. vi. L. vii. c. 11. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. i. L. ii. c. 23 Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

In the mean time, the Spanish troops, at the trumpet signal, had assailed the Indian squadrons, and came up at this critical moment to the aid of their general. One of his pages named Viota, a youth of noble birth, sprang from his horse and aided De Soto to mount him. The governor, once more on horseback, put himself at the head of his cavalry, and spurred among the Indians. The latter had no lances to defend themselves; and, being assailed by three hundred horse, broke and fled in every direction. A great number of those who were in the rear took refuge among the entangled thickets of the forest; others threw themselves into the large lake and escaped, while others scattered themselves wildly over the plain, where more than three hundred were killed, and a few taken.

The worse fate attended the vanguard, composed of the bravest warriors; who are always doomed to fare the worst in battle. After receiving the first charge of the cavalry, they fled; but, being unable to reach either the forest or the large lake, more than nine hundred threw themselves into the smaller one. Here they were surrounded by the Spaniards, who endeavored by threats and promises, and occasional shots from their cross-bows, and arquebusses, to induce them to surrender. The Indians replied only by flights of arrows. As the lake was too deep to give them footing, three or four would cling together, and support each other by swimming, while one would mount upon their backs, and ply his bow and arrows. In this way an incessant skirmishing was kept up all day long; numbers of the Indians were slain, all their arms were exhausted, yet no one gave signs of surrendering.

When night came, the Spaniards posted themselves round the lake, the horse by two and two, the foot in parties of six,

near to each other, lest the Indians should escape in the dark. Some of the latter endeavored to save themselves, by covering their heads with the leaves of water-lilies, and swimming noiselessly to the shore; but the watchful troopers, perceiving the turmoil and bubbling in the water, would spur their horses to the bank, and drive the Indians again into the channel,* in hopes of tiring them out, and thus forcing them to capitulate; for, while the Spaniards threatened them with death if they did not yield, they offered them peace and friendship if they would surrender.

So obstinate were they, however, that midnight arrived before one of them submitted, although they had passed fourteen hours in the water. At length, the intercessions of Juan Ortiz, and the four Indian interpreters, began to have effect. The most weary would render themselves, one and two at a time, but so slowly, that by the dawn of day not more than fifty had surrendered. The residue seeing that these were kindly treated, and being admonished by them, now gave themselves up in greater numbers, but still slowly and reluctantly. Some when near the bank would return to the middle of the lake, until the love of life compelled them to yield. At length, at ten o'clock, two hundred came to shore at the same time, and surrendered themselves, after having been swimming four and twenty hours. They were in wretched condition, swollen with the water they had swallowed, and overcome with fatigue, hunger, and the want of sleep. There still remained seven Indians in the lake, men of such unconquerable spirit that neither the prayers of the interpreters, the promises of the governor, nor the example of their comrades, who had surrendered, had any effect upon them.†

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11. † Ibid.

They treated all promises with scorn, and defied both menaces and death. In this way they remained until three in the afternoon, and would have remained there until they died. The governor, however, was struck with admiration of their courage and magnanimity, and thought it would be inhuman to allow such brave men to perish. He ordered twelve Spaniards therefore, expert swimmers, to go into the lake with their swords in their mouths, and draw these warriors forth. The Indians were too much exhausted to resist; the Spaniards seized them by the legs, the arms, and hair, drew them to land, and threw them upon the bank, where they lay extended upon the sand, more dead than alive;* having, according to the Spanish narrator, been for thirty hours in the water, apparently without putting foot to the ground or receiving any other relief: an exploit, adds the Inca historian, almost incredible, and which I would not dare to write, if it were not for the authority of so many cavaliers and nobles, who, in the Indies, and in Spain, assured me of the truth of it, besides the authority of him who related this history to me, and who, in all things, is worthy of belief.

The reader, however, without questioning the veracity of the cavaliers, will be prone to surmise that the Indians were enabled, from time to time, to snatch a few moments of repose, on shallows near the banks of the lake.

The heroic obstinacy of the seven Indians had extorted the admiration of the Spaniards. Moved to compassion by their present deplorable state, they bore them to the encampment, and

* The Portuguese Narrative adds, that they were immediately put into irons. The Inca's account, however, of the treatment of the Spaniards towards these brave warriors, is more in unison with the generous nature of De Soto.

used such assiduous means, that they were restored to animation in the course of the night.

The next morning, the governor summoned them before him, and pretending to be angry, demanded the reason of their desperate resistance, and why they had not surrendered themselves as their companions had done.

Four of them, who were in the prime of manhood, replied, that they were leaders, or captains, chosen as such by their cacique, from his confidence in their courage and constancy. Their actions were to justify his choice. They were bound to set an example to their children, to their brother warriors, and above all to such as should thenceforth be appointed as leaders. They felt as if, being alive, they had failed in fulfilling their duty and vindicating their honor; and, while they acknowledged the kindness of the governor, regretted only that he had not left them to perish in the lake. "If you want to add to your favors," said they, "take our lives. After surviving the defeat and capture of our chieftain, we are not worthy to appear before him, or to live in the world."*

The governor listened with admiration to the heroic words of these savage warriors; and when they had finished, he turned to their three companions, who had remained silent. These were young men not more than eighteen years of age, sons and heirs to caciques of the adjacent provinces. The governor demanded of them their reason for persisting so desperately in their defence, as they were not leaders, nor bound by the same obligations as their companions.

They replied, that they had been incited to hostility, not

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. i. L. ii. c. 25. Herrera, Decad. vi. L. vii. c. 11.

through a desire for gain, or through any implacable spirit against the Spaniards, but merely from a thirst for glory. That although they were not chiefs, yet as the sons of caciques, and destined one day to be caciques themselves, they felt bound more than all others to signalize themselves by bravery in action, and by a contempt for suffering and death. "These, O offspring of the sun!" said they, "are the reasons for our obstinate hostility: if they are sufficient in your eyes, pardon us; if not, we are at your mercy. Strike us dead, for nothing is prohibited to the conqueror."

The noble spirit and heroic words of these youths charmed the Spaniards, and their hearts were touched at seeing them exposed so young to such adversity. The governor, likewise, who was of a compassionate nature, was moved to pity. He embraced them as if they were his own sons; commending their valor and heroism, which he considered as proofs of noble blood, and illustrious descent.

For two days he detained them in the camp, feasting them at his table, and treating them with every distinction; at the end of which time, he dismissed them with presents of linen, cloths, silks, mirrors, and other articles of Spanish manufacture. He also sent by them presents to their fathers and other relations, with proffers of his friendship. The young caciques took leave of him with many expressions of gratitude, and departed joyfully for their homes, accompanied by a number of their countrymen whom he had liberated.

As to the four captive leaders, they were retained as prisoners, and on the following day were summoned before the governor, with their cacique Vitachuco. De Soto reproached them with the treacherous and murderous plot devised against him

and his soldiers, at a time when they were professing the kindest amity. Such treason, he observed, merited death: yet he wished to give the natives an evidence of his clemency: he pardoned them, therefore, and restored them to his friendship; warning them, however, to beware how they again deceived him, or trespassed against the safety and welfare of Spaniards, lest they should bring down upon themselves dire and terrible revenge.

The Indians who had come out of the lake and surrendered themselves, were distributed among the Spaniards to serve them as menials, during their sojourn in the province. This was partly as a punishment to them for their participation in the late treason, and partly as an example to warn the neighboring Indians from like aggressions.

CHAPTER XXI.

DEATH OF VITACHUCO AND HIS WARRIORS.

1539.

Vitachuco now remained in some sort a prisoner in his own house, but was treated with great kindness and respect, and dined at the governor's table. Rage and hatred, however, rankled in his heart; and he soon conceived another scheme of vengeance. Nine hundred of his most noble, valiant, and well-tried warriors, were dispersed among the Spaniards: equalling the latter in number, and, as he thought, in personal prowess. They attended their new masters as slaves at meal times, when the Spaniards would be seated, off their guard, and many of them without weapons. At such a moment, he conceived it would be easy, by a preconcerted movement, to strike a signal blow, and rid themselves at once of their oppressions.

Scarcely had Vitachuco conceived this rash scheme, than he hastened to put it into operation. He had four young Indians to attend him as pages. These he sent to the principal prisoners, revealing his plan, with orders that they should pass it secretly and adroitly from one to another, and hold themselves in readiness, at the appointed time, to carry it into effect. The dinner hour of the third day was the time fixed upon for striking

the blow. Vitachuco would be dining with the governor, and the Indians in general attending upon their respective masters. The cacique was to watch his opportunity, spring upon the governor and kill him; giving, at the moment of assault, a war-whoop that should resound throughout the village. The war-whoop was to be the signal for every Indian to grapple with his master, or with any other Spaniard at hand, and dispatch him on the spot.

Many of the Indians saw the madness of this second project; but, accustomed to yield implicit obedience to their chiefs, promised to carry it through or perish in the attempt.

On the day appointed, Vitachuco dined as usual at the table of the governor. When the repast was concluded, he straightened himself upon the bench upon which he was seated, and twisting his body from side to side, stretched first one arm, then the other, to the full extent, with clenched fists, then drew them up so that his fists rested on his shoulders, then jerked them out two or three times, until every joint cracked like a snapped reed. In this way the Indians of Florida used to rally their strength when about to undertake any extraordinary feat.

After this preparation he sprang upon his feet, closed instantly with the governor, seized him with the left hand by the collar, and with the other fist dealt him such a blow in the face as to level him with the ground, the blood gushing out of eyes, nose, and mouth. The cacique threw himself upon his victim to finish his work, giving, at the same time, the signal war-whoop.

All this was the work of an instant, and before the officers present had time to recover from their astonishment, the governor lay senseless beneath the tiger grasp of Vitachuco. One

more blow from the savage would have been fatal; but before he could give it, a dozen swords and lances were thrust through his body, and he fell dead.

The war-whoop had resounded throughout the village. At hearing the fated signal, the Indians attending upon their masters, assailed them with whatever weapon or missile they could command: some seized upon pikes and swords; others snatched up the pots in which meat was stewing at the fire, and, beating the Spaniards about the head, bruised and scalded them at the same time; some caught up plates, pitchers, jars, and the pestles wherewith they pounded the maize; others the bones remaining from the repast; and others seized upon stools, benches, and tables, striking with impotent fury when their weapons had not the power to harm; others snatched up burning firebrands, and rushed like very devils into the affray.

Many of the Spaniards were terribly burnt, bruised, and scalded; some had their arms broken; others were maimed by sticks and stones. One was knocked down by his slave with a firebrand, and beset by three other Indians, who dashed out his brains.

Another was assailed with blows, his teeth knocked out, and he was on the point of falling a sacrifice, when some Spaniards came to his assistance. The savage assailant fled and mounted a hand-ladder into a granary opening upon a court-yard, taking with him a lance which he found leaning against the wall. The Spaniards attempted to ascend after him, but he planted himself in the door-way, and defended the entrance so bravely with the lance, that no one dared to approach him.* At length, Diego de Soto, a relative of the governor, arrived in the court-yard,

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

armed with a cross-bow. He presented it and took aim. The Indian never attempted to draw back or screen himself; his object was, not to save his life, but to sell it as dearly as possible. At the instant that De Soto drew the bow he threw the lance. The steeled point grazed the right shoulder of the Spaniard, and the shaft knocked him down upon his knees, passing half a length beyond, and remaining quivering in the ground. The aim of De Soto was more certain. His shaft pierced the Indian through the breast, and killed him on the spot.

It was fortunate for the Spaniards that most of the Indians were in chains, and none of them were regularly armed, otherwise their assault would have been attended with great carnage. As it was, many of the Spaniards were maimed and mangled, and four were slain before the savages could be overpowered.

Some of the Spaniards were so exasperated at the wounds they had received, and at the intelligence of the maltreatment of the governor, that they wreaked their fury upon every Indian in their power. Others, who were cavaliers, thought it beneath their dignity to take away the lives of slaves. They brought their prisoners, therefore, to the grand square of the village, and delivered them into the hands of the archers of the general's guard, who dispatched them with their halberts.

Among the cavaliers who thus brought their captive slaves to be executed, was one of a small and delicate form, named Francisco de Saldaña. He entered the square, leading after him a powerful Indian, by a cord tied round his neck. No sooner, however, did the savage perceive what was passing, and the fate that awaited him, than he closed upon Saldaña as he walked before him, seized him with one hand by the neck and with the

other by the thigh, raised him like a child, turned him topsy-turvy with his head downwards, and dashed him to the ground with a violence that stunned him. Jumping then upon his body he would have dispatched him in an instant had not a number of Spaniards rushed with drawn swords to his rescue. The Indian seized Saldaña's sword, and received them so bravely, that though there were more than fifty, he kept them all at bay. Grasping the sword with both hands, he threw himself into the midst of them, whirling himself round like a wheel, and dealing about blows so rapidly and madly that no one dare oppose him, and they were obliged to shoot him down with their firearms.*

These, and many similar scenes of desperate valor, occurred in this wild affray. That the interpreters and the Indian allies who had accompanied the army from the other provinces might be embroiled with the natives of the neighborhood, so that they would not dare thenceforward to abandon the Spaniards, they were compelled to aid in the destruction of the prisoners, many of whom were tied to stakes in the public square, and shot down with their arrows.†

In these battles, and the subsequent massacres, fell Vitachuco and thirteen hundred of his warriors, the flower of his nation, among whom were the four brave leaders who had survived from the lake.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

† Idem. The Portuguese narrator calls the village where this affray took place Napataca.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ARMY PASS THROUGH THE PROVINCE OF OSACHILE—COME TO A VAST MORASS—SEVERE SKIRMISHING WITH THE SAVAGES—PREPARATIONS TO CROSS THE GREAT MORASS.

1539.

The blow which Hernando de Soto received from Vitachuco had been so violent that it was half an hour before he recovered his senses. His whole face was bruised and disfigured, and several of his teeth were broken, so that for twenty days he could partake of no solid food. It was necessary to remain four days in the village, before he and his wounded soldiers were sufficiently recovered to bear a journey. On the fifth day he resumed his march, departing in search of another province, called Osachile.*

The first day they journeyed four leagues, and encamped on the bank of a large and deep river, which divides the two provinces, and over which it was necessary to throw a bridge.† They had scarcely begun their preparations, however, when they beheld the Indians on the opposite side in hostile array. Abandoning the construction of the bridge, they hastily formed six rafts, on which a hundred men passed over, cross-bow men and arquebu-

* This name is spelled Uzachil, by the Portuguese narrator.

† Believed to be the Suwanee.

siers, and fifty horsemen, carrying with them the saddles for their horses.

As soon as these reached the land, their horses were driven into the water, and made to swim across. Their owners received them on the shore, saddled and mounted them immediately, and galloped out into the plain. At sight of them the Indians took to flight; and the Spaniards worked without molestation at the bridge, which was finished in a day and a half.

The army passed the river, and after travelling two leagues through a country free from woods, came to large fields of maize, beans, and pumpkins, with scattered habitations. While they were dispersed about the field a number of Indians, lurking in ambush among the grain, assailed them with flights of arrows, by which many of them were wounded. The Spaniards started in pursuit of them lance in hand. There was some sharp skirmishing; many natives were wounded, and a few taken prisoners. The latter had chains put about their necks, and were distributed among the soldiers; and made to carry the baggage, pound the maize, and fulfil other servile employments.*

The Spaniards arrived at Osachile, a village about ten leagues from that of Vitachuco. It contained two hundred houses, which were deserted, the cacique and his people having fled to the woods, terrified by the rumors of the sanguinary massacre of Vitachuco.† The governor sent proffers of peace and friendship to him by the Indian prisoners. He made no reply, however, neither did any of the envoys return.

The village of Osachile‡ resembled most of the Indian vil

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12. † Idem.

‡ Williams thinks this is the Tallahasochc of the Seminoles, near Mico, in Hamilton county; but we are inclined to believe, with Mr. Fairbanks, that

lages of Florida. The natives always endeavored to build upon high ground, or at least to erect the houses of the cacique or chief upon an eminence. As the country was very level, and high places seldom to be found, they constructed artificial mounds of earth, the top of each being capable of containing from ten to twenty houses. Here resided the cacique, his family, and attendants. At the foot of this hill was a square, according to the size of the village, around which were the houses of the leaders and most distinguished inhabitants. The rest of the people erected their wigwams as near to the dwelling of their chief as possible.

An ascent in a straight line, from fifteen to twenty feet wide, led to the top of the hillock, and was flanked on each side by trunks of trees, joined one to another, and thrust deep into the earth; other trunks of trees formed a kind of stairway. All the other sides of the mound were steep and inaccessible.

Many of the artificial mounds noticed by the traveller at the present day, and about which there has been so much curious and learned speculation, were doubtless artificial structures thrown up by the natives for the purposes here given. These mounds of earth seem to be for similar purposes with those of stone, on which are erected the ancient edifices found in Central America.

While in the village of Osachile, the Spaniards learnt that that they were not far from the province of Apalachee, the country of the Apalachians. Of this province they had heard much as to its great extent and fertility, and the bravery and

this was Suwanee Old Town, which he says has good hammack land about it, and is a very old Indian town. The river Oscilla may take its name from this old Indian village and province.

ferocity of its inhabitants. Througout their march the Indians had predicted that the warriors of Apalachee would transfix them with their lances, hew them in pieces, or consume them with fire. De Soto was little moved by their menaces; his great desire was to see this boasted province; and, if it were as fertile and abundant as represented, to winter there. He remained, therefore, but two days in Osachile, at the end of which he resumed his march.

The Spaniards were three days traversing an uninhabited desert, twelve leagues in extent, which lay between the two provinces, and about noon on the fourth day arrived at a great morass.* It was bordered by forests of huge and lofty trees, with a dense underwood of thorns and brambles, and clambering vines, so interwoven and matted together as to form a perfect barrier. Through this the Indians had made a narrow path, scarce wide enough for two persons to walk abreast. In the centre of the morass was a sheet of water half a league in width, and as far as the eye could reach in extent.

* This is supposed by Mr. M'Culloch and others to have been the great Swamp of Okefenokee, lying in lat. 31° North, on the frontiers of Georgia and Florida; but we are inclined to agree with Mr. Fairbanks, that it was the swamp at the head of the Estauhatchee, a river emptying into the Gulf. He remarks that it could not have been the Okefenokee, as that is 150 miles nearly from Apalache, and is altogether unlike the morass, and no Indian highway goes through it; its diameter being 12 or 15 miles. Almost any wet Florida swamp at the head of a river would answer the description given of the morass crossed by De Soto. He adds, that from his *personal* knowledge of the country, he feels quite confident that the course we have thus far marked out must be nearly, if not exactly the one taken; and the fact that the Seminoles kept the whole army of the United States at bay for seven years, and now require to be bought out, is itself an evidence of the nature of the country. Vide Kerr's Voyages and Travels, Vol. v. p. 466. M'Culloch's Researches, p. 524. Darby's Florida, p. 19, 20.

De Soto encamped at an early hour on a fine plain on the skirts of the forest, and ordered out a hundred cross-bowmen, archers, and pikemen, with thirty horse and twelve expert swimmers, to explore the passage of the morass, ascertain the depth of the water, and search for a ford, against the following day.

They had penetrated but a little distance, when they were opposed by Indian warriors. The passage, however, was so narrow, and so completely walled on each side by thorny and impervious forest, that not more than the two foremost of each vanguard could come to blows. The Spaniards, therefore, ordered two of the stoutest to the front, armed with sword and buckler, followed by two cross-bowmen and archers. In this way they drove the Indians before them until they came to the water. Here, as both parties could scatter themselves, and had room for action, there was some hard fighting. Many good shots were given, and several were killed and wounded on both sides.

Finding it impossible, under such heavy fire, to examine the depth of the water, the Spaniards sent word to the governor, who came to their aid, with the best soldiers of the army. The enemy likewise received a reinforcement, and the battle became more fierce and bloody. Both fought to their waists in the water, stumbling about among thorns and brambles, and twisted roots, and the sunken trunks of fallen trees. As the Spaniards were aware that it would not do to return without discovering the pass, they continued to charge the enemy with great impetuosity, and succeeded in driving them out of the water. They found that the narrow pass through the forest continued through the water, being cleared of thorns and roots and sunken trees,

so that the Indians could wade up to their middles, excepting about forty paces of the mid-channel, where it was too deep to be forded. This they passed by a bridge of two trees fastened together. The opposite side of the morass was bordered by the same kind of impervious forest as the other, and, like it, traversed by a narrow Indian path. The distance through the two forests, and across the morass, was about a league and a half.

The governor, having well reconnoitered the pass, returned with his men to the encampment. Here he held a council of war, in which the difficulties and dangers of the case were discussed, and the mode of meeting them determined upon.

It was arranged that two hundred picked men should be thrown in the advance to secure the pass, and prepare the way for the passage of the main body. One hundred of these were to be horsemen, and one hundred foot-soldiers. The former being better armed than the infantry, and protected by bucklers, always received less injury from the arrows of the enemy; they were, therefore, to take the lead on foot, as horses would only be an embarrassment in such a narrow pass. In this way they would, as it were, form a shield to the hundred foot-soldiers, consisting of arquebusiers and archers.

They were all to be provided with bills, hatchets, and other implements for clearing an encamping place in the opposite forest, on the side of the morass; for, as the Spaniards would have to pass the narrow ford one by one, in the face of a ferocious enemy, it would be impossible for the whole army to traverse the morass and both borders of woodland in one day. It appeared advisable, therefore, to make a lodgment in the opposite forest.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. ii. L. ii. c. 1.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF THE PERILOUS PASSAGE OF THE GREAT MORASS.

1539.

All the requisite preparations being made, two hundred picked men sallied out of the encampment, each carrying in his bosom his day's allowance, consisting of a little boiled or toasted maize. Two hours before dawn they traversed the defile of the forest, as silently as possible, until they reached the water. They soon found the ford where the stones and roots and sunken logs had been cleared away; keeping along this they came to the bridge of fallen trees and logs, across the deepest part of the channel. This they passed without molestation from the Indians, who had left the whole pass unguarded, not imagining that the Spaniards would dare to penetrate the dense forest, or ford the deep and perilous passage of the morass by night.

When they perceived at daybreak, however, that they had passed the bridge, they rushed with cries and howls to dispute the passage of the morass yet to be traversed, which was about a quarter of a league. The Spaniards received their attack manfully: both parties fought up to the middle in water. The Indians were soon repulsed and driven into the defile of the opposite forest, into which they could only enter one at a time. This defile being so narrow, and walled in by an impervious forest, it

was easy to blockade the passage and keep the enemy from sallying forth. Forty men were ordered to do so, while the remaining hundred and fifty went to work to cut down trees and clear a place for the army to encamp.

In this manner they remained all the day, the Indians in the bosom of the forest shouting and yelling, as if to frighten with their noise those whom they would not engage with their arms; some of the Spaniards watching, the others felling trees and burning the fallen timber. When night came, each one remained where he chanced to be. Disturbed by the yells of the Indians, and obliged to maintain a constant vigil, the Spaniards passed a sleepless night.

The next morning the troops undertook the passage, and although they met with no opposition, found many difficulties in the ford, and, being obliged to pass one by one, were the whole day in crossing.

By night they were all encamped on the cleared ground, where, however, they enjoyed but little sleep, in consequence of the yells and attacks of the enemy.

At break of day they pressed forward through the defile of the second forest, driving the Indians slowly before them, who retreated step by step, plying their bows incessantly, so that every inch of the way had to be won at the edge of the sword.

At length, after fighting onward for half a league, they emerged from this dense and thorny forest into more open woodland. Here, however, the Indians, foreseeing more scope for the horses, had taken precautions accordingly.

It was in a part of this very morass, though not in this immediate neighborhood, that Pamphilo de Narvaez had been de

feated about ten or eleven years before; and the Indians, profiting by the experience then gained, and encouraged by the recollection of that triumph, trusted for like success in the present instance.

To render the much dreaded horses ineffective, they had blocked up and traversed the open places of the forest with great logs, and branches tied from tree to tree; and in the close and matted parts had made narrow passages by which they might dart forth, make an assault, and vanish again in an instant.

As soon, therefore, as the Spaniards entered this more open woodland, they were assailed by showers of arrows from every side. The Indians, scattered about among the thickets, sallied forth, plied their bows with intense rapidity, and plunged again into the forest. The horses were of no avail; the arquebusiers and archers seemed no longer a terror; for in the time a Spaniard could make one discharge and reload his musket, or place another bolt in his cross-bow, an Indian would launch six or seven arrows; scarce had one arrow taken flight before another was in the bow.

In their hampered situation, the Spaniards found it impossible to assault the enemy; their only alternative was to defend themselves and press forward. All the while, too, that they were exposed to this galling fire, they were insulted by the taunts and threats of the enemy, who reminded them of their victory over Pamphilo de Narvaez, and menaced them with a like defeat.

For two long leagues did the Spaniards toil and fight their way forward through this forest; irritated and mortified by these galling attacks, vexatious taunts, and the impossibility of

retaliating; at length they emerged into an open and level country. Here, overjoyed at being freed from this forest prison, they gave reins to their horses and free vent to their smothered rage, and scoured the plain, lancing and cutting down every Indian they encountered, out of revenge of their own annoyances, and of the past defeat of Narvaez. But few of the enemy were taken prisoners; many were put to the sword; and thus did they suffer severely for the presumptuous confidence inspired by their former triumph over Spaniards.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. ii. L. ii. c. 2. Herrera, Hist. Ind., Decad. vi. L. vii. c. 12.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE INDIANS MAKE A DESPERATE STAND AT A DEEP STREAM—THE SPANIARDS GAIN THE PASS AND ARRIVE AT THE INDIAN VILLAGE OF ANHAYEA, IN THE PROVINCE OF APALACHEE.

1539.

THE Spaniards had now arrived at the commencement of a fertile region, covered with those villages and fields of grain for which the province of Apalachee was famous throughout the country. Wearied with their toilsome march and incessant fighting, they encamped for the night in the open plain, near a small village. Still they were deprived of the repose so necessary to them. All night they were disturbed by yells and howlings, by repeated assaults, and flights of arrows discharged into the camp.

At daybreak they resumed their march through extensive fields of maize, beans, pumpkins, and other vegetables, extending on each side of the road as far as the eye could reach, interspersed with small cabins, showing a numerous but scattered population.

The inhabitants justified their ferocious and warlike reputation, for they kept up incessant attacks, sallying forth from their dwellings, or starting up from corn-fields where they had lain in ambush; and though the Spaniards wreaked upon them a bloody

revenge, slaughtering them without mercy, yet nothing could check the fury of the survivors.

After contending for two leagues through the fields of corn, the Spaniards came to a deep stream, bordered by forests;* where the Indians had erected palisades and barriers, to impede the passing of the horse, as well as to protect themselves. As this was one of the strongest and most important passes, and in a manner their last hope, they had prepared themselves to defend it vigorously.

Having reconnoitered the pass, the Spaniards made arrangements accordingly. The best armed horsemen alighted, and buckling on their shields, advanced with swords and hatchets in hand, gained the pass, and broke down the palisades and barriers. The Indians fought desperately to defend them: several Spaniards were killed and many wounded, but they succeeded in forcing their way with less difficulty than they had apprehended.

The stream forded, they marched two more leagues without opposition, through the same kind of fertile and cultivated country; then choosing a place clear from forests, encamped for the night. After four days and three nights of watching, toiling, and fighting, they needed repose, and had hoped, in this open place, where the horses had free career, that they should be able to enjoy it without molestation. The darkness of the night, however, encouraged the assaults of their restless and daring foes, and obliged them to keep up a constant vigil with their weapons in their hands.

Even the Indians who were captured evinced the implacable and unconquerable spirit for which the Apalachian tribe was famous. Though in the power of their enemies, they continued to

* Mr. M'Culloch supposes this to be the river Uche.

carry an air of haughtiness and defiance; boasting of their origin, vaunting the valor of their nation, and telling the Spaniards that they would soon arrive at the village of their cacique, where he and a host of warriors were waiting to destroy them. The name of this cacique was Capafi; the first they had heard of, whose name differed from that of his village. Learning that this formidable village was actually but about two leagues distant, Hernando de Soto, on the following morning, which was the fifth since crossing the morass, put himself in the advance, with two hundred horse and a hundred foot. On their way they put all the Indians they met with to the sword.

On reaching the village they found it recently deserted by the cacique and his men. They pursued them for some distance, killed some of the Indians, and captured others; but the cacique made his escape. They then took up their quarters in the village, which was named Anhayea,* and contained two hundred and fifty large and commodious houses: the Adelantado took possession of the dwelling of the cacique, which stood at one end of the village, and was superior to the rest.†

In addition to this principal village, they understood that there were many others in the province, containing from fifty to a hundred houses, more or less, besides a multitude of dwellings scattered about the country. The province throughout was reputed to be pleasant, the soil fertile, producing maize, cucumbers, beans, and wild plums; the rivers abounded in fish, which the natives caught in vast quantities throughout the year, and dried for use.‡

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

† This village is supposed to be in the neighborhood of the modern town of Tallahassee. Colonel Pickett says, Indian traditions confirm this opinion.

‡ Garcilaso de la Vega, P. ii. L. ii. c. 4. Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

CHAPTER XXV.

JUAN DE AÑASCO SETS OUT IN SEARCH OF THE OCEAN—THE ADVENTURES HE MET WITH BY THE WAY.

1539.

The army remained in the village of Anhayca for several days, recruiting from its past toils, although the enemy did not fail to continue their attacks by night and day. The governor now sent out bands of horse and foot to explore the surrounding country for fifteen or twenty leagues. Two captains, the one named Arias Tinoco, the other, Andreas de Vasconcelos, were sent in different directions to the northward. They returned, the one in eight, and the other in nine days, having met with no adventures worthy of relation. Both reported that they had found many populous villages, and that the country was fertile and free from morasses or extensive forests. A third captain had been sent about the same time to the southward: this was Juan de Añasco, the Contador of the army. He was one whom De Soto often chose for undertakings that required a stout heart and active spirit, though he was sometimes prone to be a little hasty in temper and positive in command. He had under his command forty horse and fifty foot, and was accompanied by Gonzalo Silvestre and Gomez Arias. The latter was a relation of the governor's wife, and a hardy soldier, seasoned in all kinds of perils and

vicissitudes by land and water, as most Spanish adventurers were in those days. He had seen rough times in Moorish warfare; had been a slave in Barbary; and, to his adventurous valor, added sage experience in council.

Thus accompanied, Juan de Añasco set off towards the south in quest of the ocean, which was said to be less than thirty leagues distant from Anhayca. He was guided in his expedition by an Indian, who professed great fidelity and attachment to the Spaniards.

For two days they travelled over an excellent road, wide and level, passing two small rivers which were easily forded. Here they came to the village of Aute, which was abandoned by the inhabitants, but well stocked with provisions. Taking with them a supply for four days, they continued on by the same commodious road. At length the Indian diverged from it, and led the way into dense and thorny forests without any path. The ground was in many places rough and broken, and covered with fallen trees. In other places were deep bogs covered with grass, that presented the appearance of firm land, but into which horse and foot sunk and floundered, and were almost smothered.

In this wilderness they wandered about for five days, frequently crossing their former track, until their stock of provisions was nearly exhausted. Three times they came, as they thought, within sound of the distant surges of the sea, and each time the Indian struck in an opposite direction. In their vexation and perplexity they began to suspect his fidelity, and that he had a design to make them perish with hunger in this inextricable forest, even though he should share the same fate. These suspicions, however, they kept to themselves, for they had no other guide.

They now determined to return to Aute, get a fresh supply of provisions, and renew their search. Their return was the more toilsome, as they had to retrace their footsteps through fear of losing the road, and the mire of the bogs was so much trampled that they sank deeper in it than before. Four days did they keep on in this painful way, and their suspicions of their Indian guide revived. They grew peevish in their conduct towards him; quarrels ensued between him and the soldiers; he was beaten, and would have been slain on the spot, had not Añasco interfered. Exasperated to revenge, he watched an opportunity at night while the soldiers slept, and snatching a brand from the fire, struck those who had maltreated him. This only brought on him severer punishment. A chain was then put round his neck and the other end given to a soldier, to keep close watch over him.

The next morning, in the course of their rugged march, the guide, as he followed the soldier who had him in charge, sprang suddenly upon him, threw him to the ground, and began to trample upon him.

Upon this the Spaniards fell upon the Indian with sword and pike: even Juan de Añasco, losing all temper, raised himself in his stirrups, and with both hands, dealt him a terrible thrust with his lance; after which, as he lay for dead, a hound was turned loose to tear him to pieces.

Their guide being slain, and their anger being thus cruelly appeased, they began to think which way they should direct their steps. In this dilemma they turned to an Indian whom they had captured on their return to Aute. From him they gathered by signs, and a few words which they understood, that it would be impossible to go to the sea by their present route, on

account of the swamps and forests; but that if they would return to Aute he would take them by a direct road to the coast, and to the very place where Pamphilo de Narvaez had built his vessels and embarked.

They had no alternative but to trust to this new guide, hoping that the fate of his predecessor would have a salutary effect on him. They returned, therefore, to the village of Aute, after fifteen days of toilsome and fruitless wandering.

As Gomez Arias and Gonzalo Silvestre were riding in the advance, they took two Indian prisoners, near to the village. On questioning them about the sea-coast, and the proper route to find it, they confirmed all that had been said by the present guide. The Spaniards comforted themselves with the hope, therefore, that they would now be able to accomplish the object of their journey; and with this persuasion, slept soundly and contentedly that night, after all their toils.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JUAN DE AÑASCO ARRIVES AT THE BAY, WHERE HE FINDS TRACES OF PAMPHILO DE NARVAEZ.

1539.

On the following day Juan de Añasco and his followers set out once more from the village of Aute, under the guidance of the three Indians, by the new route they pointed out. The road was wide and open, free from any bad passages, excepting one narrow marsh, in which the horses did not sink over their fetlocks. They had not journeyed more than two leagues when they arrived at a spacious bay,* and, proceeding along its shores, came at last, to their great joy, to the very place where the unfortunate Pamphilo de Narvaez and his people had sojourned. Here were the remains of a rude forge, where the iron work for the vessels had been wrought; and around it lay scattered charcoal and cinders. There were large trunks of trees, also, hollowed out into troughs, in which the horses had been fed; and not far off lay the bones of the horses that had been killed.

The Spaniards gazed with melancholy interest on these relics of a disastrous expedition, and eagerly sought to glean from their savage guides further particulars respecting Narvaez and

* Evidently the Bay of St. Marks, or Apalachee. See Charlevoix Journal Historique, Let. xxxiv.

his men. The Indians had picked up some Spanish phrases during the time that Narvaez sojourned here; with these, aided by signs, and by words of their own language, partly understood by their hearers, they contrived to give some account of the transactions at the bay. They led the Spaniards, step by step, over the scenes visited by Narvaez; showed the place where ten of his men had been surprised and slain; and pointed out every spot where things of note had happened to that ill-starred commander.

Añasco and his companions searched in every direction to find if any letter had been left in the hollow of a tree, or any inscription on the bark, as was the common practice with discoverers, but found nothing of the kind. They then ranged along the shores of the bay to the sea, which was three leagues distant. Here, finding some old canoes cast upon the beach, ten or twelve expert swimmers embarked in them and sounded the bay, in the mid-channel of which they found sufficient depth for large ships.

After this, they placed signals in the highest trees, so as to be apparent to any one sailing along the coast; and took down, in writing, a minute account of the place and its bearings, for the information of any one who might henceforth seek it. Having taken these precautions, they made the best of their way back to the army. De Soto was rejoiced to see them, for their long absence had caused him great uneasiness. He was highly satisfied, also, to learn that they had discovered so excellent a harbor, and the very one from which Pamphilo de Narvaez had set sail with his ill-fated barks.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EXPEDITION OF JUAN DE AÑASCO AND HIS BAND OF THIRTY TROOPERS.

1539.

As the season was far advanced, De Soto resolved to proceed no farther for the present, but to winter in this abundant province of Apalachee. He caused the village of Anhayca, therefore, to be strongly fortified, additional buildings to be erected for barracks, and the surrounding country to be foraged for a stock of provisions. In the mean time, friendly messages and presents were repeatedly sent to the cacique Capafi. He, however, rejected all overtures, and buried himself in a dense forest, surrounded by morasses and perilous defiles.

As De Soto saw no use in keeping up a garrison at Hirrihigua, in the bay of Espiritu Santo, he determined to send orders to Pedro Calderon to break up his encampment there, dispatch the vessels which lay in the harbor, and march with the forces under his command to rejoin the army in their winter quarters. How to get these orders to Pedro Calderon was now the question; for whoever bore the message would have to retrace the wilderness through which the army had marched, to re-cross the deep and rapid rivers, thread the gloomy forests and miry swamps, and, as it were, run the gauntlet through tribes of

warlike and cruel savages, smarting from late conflicts, and thirsting for revenge.

After mature consideration, he resolved to intrust the perilous enterprise to a band of troopers, sufficient in number to make head against a considerable force of savages, yet not too numerous to move with secrecy and expedition.

No sooner did he propose the daring errand than there was a competition among the young cavaliers of the army to be sent upon it; for the very danger excited their ardor. De Soto chose from among them thirty prime lances, and appointed as their leader the stout-hearted and well-tried Juan de Añasco. Along with him went the shrewd and hardy Gomez Arias, his comrade in the late expedition to the bay of Aute.

Among the lances was one Pedro Moron, a mestizo, or half-blood, between Spaniard and mulatto, a native of the island of Cuba. This soldier, beside being an admirable swimmer, was gifted with a scent almost equal to that of a dog; so that he had often, in the island of Cuba, winded and traced a fugitive Indian into the thickets and caves in which he had hid himself. He also could scent fire at the distance of a league, though no light or smoke was to be perceived.* In company with him went another mestizo, his friend and countryman, likewise a native of Cuba.

It was on the 20th of November† (1539) that this small and intrepid band set out on their hazardous errand. As celerity of movement was all important, each horseman was lightly equipped with a casque, a coat of mail under his doublet, and a lance; a pair of alforjas or wallets were slung across the saddle-bow, in which, beside a small supply of food for himself, and corn for his steed, he had two or three spare horseshoes, and a few nails.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. ii. L. ii. c. 7. † Portuguese Relation.

Long before the day dawned the gallant troopers were on the road.* Pressing forward, they scoured along at full speed, when practicable, fearing lest the rumor of their coming might precede them, and give the Indians time to assemble and dispute the passes. Overtaking two of the natives, they put them to death, to prevent their giving the alarm to their comrades scattered about the fields. They traversed the extensive morass and vast forests of Apalachee, without opposition, and halted in an open plain on its skirts; ten of their number keeping watch while the remainder slept.

Ere it was light they were again in their saddles, and made the best of their way over that desert tract of country lying between the morass of Apalachee and the village of Osachile. Apprehensive that the Indians might have heard of their approach, and would make stout resistance in the village, Añasco ordered a halt. As night closed in, they pushed onward with great caution, and came in sight of the village about midnight. Not stopping to reconnoitre, they loosened their reins, clapped spurs to their horses, and dashed through at full speed. Having galloped about a league further, they struck off their course for a short distance, and halted for the remainder of the night; having travelled this day more than thirteen leagues.

At daybreak they resumed their journey, putting their horses to their speed, as numbers of the natives were scattered about the fields, and might give the alarm. Thus, they went five leagues on a scamper to the river Osachile, at the risk of their horses; but these were, luckily, so high mettled that they suffered but little.

* The account of this romantic and perilous expedition of the thirty troopers, is entirely from the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. The Portuguese narrative makes very brief mention of it

On approaching the river, Gonzalo Silvestre, who had pushed his horse more than his companions, was in advance. He was fearful lest the river should have swollen since the army crossed it. Fortunately, however, the water had fallen. He was so overjoyed that he plunged in with his horse, swam the stream, and mounted the bank on the opposite side. When his companions came up they were rejoiced to see him on the opposite bank, for they had entertained the same fear, that the river might have increased: they all dashed in, gained the other side without accident, and, with light hearts, dismounted and made their breakfast on the green-sward.

They were soon again on horse, and at a moderate pace approached the village of Vitachuco. Thinking to have found the place as they had left it, they looked forward to some severe fighting with the inhabitants, and expected to pass through it at the point of the sword. A consultation was held, and it was resolved, that none should stop to fight, but at full gallop cut their way through the enemy; for the death of one of their number, or of a horse, would be a serious loss, and increase the perils of the expediti n. Thus determined, they spurred on, and were soon relieved from their apprehensions. They found the village a scene of utter desolation; the houses burnt, the walls thrown to the ground and the bodies of the Indians who had fallen on the day of battle, heaped up into a mound, and left unsepulchred. The Spaniards afterwards learnt that the natives had destroyed and deserted this village, from an idea that it had been built on an evil and ill-fated site; and they had left the corses of their people unburied, food for carrion birds and wild beasts, because, according to their superstitious belief, the unfortunate and defeated in battle were infamous and accursed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONTINUATION OF THE BOLD AND PERILOUS EXPEDITION OF JUAN DE AÑASCO, AND HIS THIRTY LANCES.

1539.

The Spaniards checked their steeds, and wound slowly through the ruins of the village, wondering at the desolation around them. They had left it but a short distance behind them, when they encountered two Indian warriors, on a hunting expedition, who took refuge under a large walnut tree. One of them, however, quitting the tree, made an attempt to reach the woods on the opposite side of the road, but two horsemen dashed after him, and before he attained this asylum, transfixed him with their lances.

The other Indian, of more courageous spirit, kept his station under the tree; and, as fortune usually favors the daring, he met with a better fate. Fixing an arrow in his bow, he fearlessly faced the Spaniards, who came galloping one behind the other, and threatened to shoot, should they approach him. Some of the cavaliers, piqued at his defiance, would fain have dismounted to attack him lance in hand.

Añasco, however, represented to them that there was neither valor nor prudence in attacking a desperate man; especially at a time when the death, even of a horse, would be deeply felt; and

when they were badly provided with medicines to heal the wounded. He then wheeled his horse, and they made a large circuit from the road, lest the Indian should shoot any of the horses as they passed: for this they dreaded most. He allowed them all to pass, and finding that, instead of attacking him, they had turned on one side, he started after them, taunting them for flying from a single foe. At this moment a shrill and wild outcry rose from every part of the surrounding fields and forests. Savages started up on all sides, and called upon each other to barricade the road. But the Spaniards gave their horses the reins and spur, and soon left the enemy behind them. This night, the third of their wayfaring, they halted in a level and beautiful plain, having travelled seventeen leagues since morning; the last eight through the province of Vitachuco.

On the fourth day they journeyed other seventeen leagues through the same province. The natives, thirsting for revenge, on account of their late defeat, were on the alert; and seeing the Spaniards passing through their country with so small a force, determined to massacre them. They sent seven Indian runners ahead to spread the alarm of the coming of the white men, that their warriors might assemble at some narrow pass and dispute the way. The Christians, however, suspecting their designs, pushed on so close upon the runners, that they took them all prisoners. At nightfall they encamped as usual in an open plain.

A little past midnight they roused themselves from their slumbers, and by sunrise had already travelled five leagues, and arrived at the river Ochali, where, on a former occasion, the Indians had killed the hound with their arrows. They hoped to find the river with less water than when they had crossed it, but,

on the contrary, it had overflowed its banks, and was now a deep, turbid stream, boiling and foaming with whirlpools, fearful even to look upon, and dangerous to traverse.

The Spaniards held an earnest consultation for a few moments: the first object was to secure the opposite bank before the Indians should arrive there. It was determined, therefore, that twelve of the best swimmers, stripping themselves of every thing except their casques and coats of mail, and disencumbering their horses of saddles and saddle-bags, and taking only their lances in their hands, should swim their steeds to the opposite bank, and take post there, to protect the crossing of their companions with the baggage. At the same time, fourteen were, with all speed, to construct a raft of drift-wood, to transport the baggage, and such of the party as could not swim; while four were to mount guard at their present post, until all should be effected.

All this was no sooner agreed upon than it was put into execution. The twelve swimmers threw off all superfluous clothes, and, taking lance in hand, urged their horses into the raging stream. Eleven of them landed in safety at a large opening on the opposite bank: the twelfth was Juan Lopez Cacho, page to the governor—the same youth who once accompanied Gonzalo Silvestre on his perilous errand to the camp. In attempting to cross, he drifted with his horse somewhat below the opening. Finding he could not stem the current up to the place where his companions landed, he let his horse swim lower down the river, and sought some other landing-place. He attempted several times to scramble up the bank, but it was like a wall, and there was no foothold for the horse. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the opposite shore, but before he

reached it, his horse began to falter through fatigue. He called out for succor to his companions who were felling wood for the raft. Four of them threw themselves into the water, and dragged him and his horse to shore. By the time they reached it, the poor youth was so chilled and exhausted that he was more like a corpse than a living being.

Leaving the cavaliers to complete the crossing of the river, we will cast a look back to the camp, to notice the proceedings of its careful commander

CHAPTER XXIX.

DE SOTO'S ENTERPRISE AGAINST THE CACIQUE OF CAPAFI.

1539.

Having dispatched Juan de Añasco and his thirty lances on their expedition, the next thought of De Soto was for the security and comfort of his army. Ever since he had been quartered in the village of Anhayca, the Indians had kept up a series of harassing attacks and alarms, by day and night. The whole neighborhood was beset by them, lurking about in ambush, so that a soldier could not stray a bow-shot from the camp without being waylaid and assaulted.

Knowing the devotion of the Indians to their chieftains, it occurred to De Soto, that if he could once get Capafi, the cacique of Apalachee, in his power, his subjects would cease from their stratagems and attacks. It was a long time, however, before he could get upon the traces of the cacique, or discover where he had concealed himself, for he did not take the field with his warriors like the other chieftains. In fact, Capafi, though redoubtable from his sovereign power, was so enormously fat and unwieldy, that he could not walk, nor even stand. He went about in his dwelling on his hands and knees, and, on moving from

place to place, was borne in a litter on the shoulders of his subjects.

At length De Soto received intelligence that the cacique had posted himself in the midst of a dense and extensive forest, about eight leagues from the camp, surrounded by tangled thickets and treacherous morasses, so as to be almost inaccessible. It was, moreover, fortified in their strongest manner, and garrisoned by the choicest Apalachian warriors, so as to be deemed by them perfectly impregnable.

As an enterprise against this stronghold was one of peculiar peril, De Soto, with his accustomed intrepidity, took it upon himself, and, at the head of a body of horse and foot, made his way in three days, with great difficulty, to the Indian citadel, the construction of which deserves particular mention.

In the heart of this close and impervious forest, a piece of ground was cleared and fortified for the residence of the cacique and his warriors. The only entrance or outlet was by a narrow path, cut through the forest. At every hundred paces this path was barricaded by palisades and trunks of trees, at each of which was posted a guard of the bravest warriors. Thus the fat cacique was ensconced in the midst of the forest, like a spider in the midst of his web, and his devoted subjects were ready to defend him to the last gasp.

When the governor arrived at the entrance of the perilous defile, he found the enemy well prepared for its defence. The Spaniards pressed forward, but the path was so narrow that the two foremost only could engage in the combat. They gained the first and second palisade at the point of the sword. Here it was necessary to cut the osiers and other bands with which the Indians had fastened the beams. While thus occupied, they

were exposed to a galling fire, and received many wounds. Notwithstanding all these obstacles, they gained one palisade after the other, until, by hard fighting, they arrived at the place of refuge of the cacique.

Here was the hottest of the battle. The Indians, driven to desperation by the imminent peril of their cacique, threw themselves upon the swords and spears of the Spaniards. The latter were animated by the sight of their wished-for prey, and by the example and voice of De Soto, who not only fought as usual, in the thickest of the affray, but called on his men by name, and cheered them on to action.

The conflict lasted a long time, with many feats of prowess on both sides. The Indians, however, for want of defensive armor, fought on unequal terms, and were most of them cut down. The cacique called out to the survivors to surrender. The latter, having done all that good soldiers could do, and seeing all their warlike efforts in vain, threw themselves on their knees before the governor, and offered up their own lives, but entreated him to spare the life of their cacique.

De Soto was moved by their valor and their loyalty; receiving them with kindness, he assured them of his pardon for the past, and that thenceforth he would consider them as friends. Capafi, not being able to walk, was borne in the arms of his attendants to kiss the hands of the governor, who, well pleased to have him in his power, treated him with urbanity and kindness.*

* The Inca, P. ii. L. ii. c. 10.

CHAPTER XXX.

SINGULAR ESCAPE OF THE CACIQUE CAPAFI.

1539.

De Soto returned well pleased to the village of Anhayea, flattering himself that the molestation from the savages would now be at an end, since he held their cacique a captive. His hopes, however, were vain, for the Indians, freed from the charge of protecting their chieftain, now devoted themselves to molesting the Christians. The general considered this a base instance of ingratitude, seeing that he had refrained from ravaging the country, and he threatened Capafi to commence a war of extermination against his people.

The cacique expressed much grief at their conduct, and informed De Soto that the most eminent of them were concealed in a thick forest, five or six leagues from the camp. He offered to go there, guarded by a body of Spaniards, and persuade them to submit, adding, that no messages would avail, as they would not be convinced that he was not a prisoner in irons, and badly treated. De Soto, accordingly, ordered a company of horse and foot to escort him, charging them to watch him closely, and not allow him to escape. They left the village before morning, and directing their march in a southerly direction, reached the forest about sunset.

Here the cacique sent some Indians of his train to his warriors, who were concealed in the forest, with orders for them to assemble before him on the following morning. Trusting that the order of Capafi would be punctually obeyed, the Spaniards betook themselves to rest for the night, having first placed sentinels at the outposts, and a strong guard around the cacique; whose unwieldy bulk, in fact, seemed a sufficient guarantee for his safety. Partly through negligence, however, and partly through weariness from three days' journey, sentinels and all fell asleep. Upon this, the wily cacique, watching his opportunity, crawled on all fours through the drowsy camp, and soon fell in with a prowling party of his subjects, who raised him on their shoulders, and bore him off to the forest.

When morning came, and the Spaniards awoke from sleep, the cacique was not to be seen. They beat up the surrounding forest, but without success. Each one wondered, and questioned the other, how so unwieldy a man had escaped without being seen or heard. The sentinels all swore that they had been exceedingly vigilant on their parts; it was unanimously agreed, therefore, that the Indians must have conjured up some demon to carry him off through the air. They set off on their return, deeply mortified; followed by the Indians at a distance, taunting and jeering them, but offering no other molestation. They arrived in the camp much crest-fallen, and invented a thousand fables to account to the governor and his officers for the escape of the prisoner. They all certified that they had witnessed strange sights that night, and insisted that the cacique could not have escaped unless he had been spirited away by devils, so unwieldy was his bulk, and so vigilant had been their watchfulness.

The governor, though aware that they had neglected their duty, knew there was no remedy, and pretended to be convinced of the truth of what they had represented. He increased their satisfaction by saying that the Indians were such notorious necromancers, that they might have performed even more wonderful feats than conjuring off a fat cacique.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CONTINUATION OF THE EXPEDITION OF JUAN DE AÑASCO AND HIS THIRTY LANCES, AND WHAT FURTHER BEFELL THEM.

1539.

We must now return to the thirty cavaliers whom we left preparing to cross the river Ocali. Those employed in felling the timber, in a short time finished the raft; for they were provided for such emergencies with hatchets and cords; they fastened two large ropes to it under the water, by which it was to be drawn, backwards and forwards, from bank to bank.

Two good swimmers carried one of the ropes to the opposite shore. They had but just accomplished this, when the Indians of Ocali rushed down to the river to assail them. The eleven cavaliers who had crossed to the opposite bank, closed with them, killed some and put the rest to flight, and remained masters of the field, excepting that flights of arrows were discharged at them from a distance.

The combat ceased, they called out lustily for their cloaks to be sent over on the first raft, as a north wind had risen, and being dripping wet, with no other covering but shirts and coats of mail, they were suffering from the cold.

The rafts made several voyages to and fro, before all the baggage, and such of the Spaniards as could not swim, were ferried

across. As fast as they landed they hastened to join their comrades, who were keeping the thickening host of savages at bay; two only remained to unload the raft.

The four horsemen who had been posted as a rearguard, to protect the men as they embarked, had succeeded in covering them from assault. Two of them, Hernando Athanasio and Gonzalo Silvestre, remained for the last crossing of the raft; which, as there would be no one left to keep back the savages, would be the most perilous. When the raft was laden and ready for the traverse, Athanasio sprang upon it, leading his horse into the water to swim alongside. Silvestre then charged upon the savages, drove them to a distance from the shore, returned at full speed, leaped from his horse, urged him into the water, cast loose the fastening of the raft, and, springing upon it, gave signal for it to be hauled over to the opposite bank.

All this was accomplished with such promptness and activity, that they were already half way across the river, and out of danger, before the Indians could reach the shore.

In all this crossing, the horses performed their part to admiration. They required no spur nor scourge, and scarce any leading; they never flinched nor hesitated, but seemed to comprehend their real danger—that an enemy was hovering near, and that their safety depended upon their docility and perfect obedience.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when all had crossed the river, neither man nor horse having received a wound. They made for the village, where they purposed resting, as Juan Lopez Cacho had been so long in the water that he was completely chilled, and appeared like a statue, without the power of moving hand or foot.

The Indians opposed their approach to the village until their wives and children had time to fly to the woods, when they also abandoned the place. The Spaniards entered and halted in the middle of the public square, fearing to quarter in the dwellings, lest, being separated, the Indians might surround and make them prisoners.

They built four huge fires in the square, near which they laid poor Juan Lopez and covered him with the cloaks of his comrades. One of his friends gave him a dry shirt which he chanced to have with him, at this time a most acceptable gift.

They remained in the village the rest of the day, in a state of anxiety. The situation of Juan Lopez rendered it impossible for him to travel this night, yet they feared the delay might give the natives time to spread the alarm and barricade the road. They resolved, however, come what might, they would place the health of their companion before any other consideration. Accordingly, they tethered one half the horses, and fed them with maize, while the remainder walked the rounds. Some occupied themselves in drying their saddles and the clothes which had been soaked in the water, and others in replenishing the saddlebags with maize; for, notwithstanding there was an abundance of dried grapes and plums, and various other fruits, they took nothing but Indian corn, which answered as food both for themselves and horses.

As night closed in, mounted sentinels patrolled round the village and its vicinity. About the mid watch, two of them, while going the rounds, heard a low murmuring noise, as of men approaching. One started off to put his comrades on their guard, while the other remained to reconnoitre. In the brightness of the starlight he descried a large and obscure mass of savages moving towards the village, and hastened to give the alarm. The

Spaniards, finding that Juan Lopez was somewhat recovered, threw several cloaks over him, and mounted him and fastened him in the saddle, while one of his comrades led his horse by the reins. In this manner they left the village in deep silence, before the enemy arrived, and so expeditiously did they travel, that at daybreak they were six leagues from Ocali.

With the same expedition they hurried through the populous country, that the rumor of their approach might not precede them; killing all the Indians they encountered near the road, lest they should give the alarm. Through the uninhabited tracts they slackened their pace, that the horses might rest and breathe, to be ready to run when it should be necessary. Thus passed this day, which was the sixth of their wayfaring, having journeyed almost twenty leagues, a part of the distance through the province of Acuera, a country peopled by very warlike savages.

The seventh day Pedro de Atienza complained of being suddenly ill. They made light of his complaint, and, not to lose time on the road, urged him forward. He continued from time to time to complain, but without being attended to, until having ridden for several hours, he fell dead beside his horse. His comrades were shocked at his sudden fate, and at their own want of sympathy in his sufferings. No time was to be lost, however, in ceremonials. They silently dug a grave with their hatchets, buried him by the wayside, and then rode on, ruminating on the loss of a brave soldier and a well-tried comrade.

That night they encamped on the border of the great morass, after travelling twenty leagues. It was bitter cold, in consequence of a keen north wind, and they were compelled to build huge fires at the risk of warning the Indians. Twenty of these would have been sufficient to dispute this pass, and massacre every one

of them, as they would possess a great advantage in their canoes, while the Spaniards could not avail themselves of their horses, neither had they archers nor cross-bows to dislodge the enemy. Thus troubled and anxious, one-third of their number kept watch at a time, while the others slept, to gain strength for the fatigues of the coming day.

CHAPTER XXXII.

PASSAGE OF THE GREAT MORASS—THE TROOPERS SUFFER FROM EXTREME COLD—THE VEXATION OF GOMEZ ARIAS.

1539.

The Spaniards had slept but a few hours when they were awakened by the sufferings of Juan De Soto, who had been companion of Pedro Atienza, and who died almost as suddenly as his comrade, being overcome by excessive fatigue.

Some of the troop fled from the neighborhood of the corpse, crying that the plague had broken out among them and caused these sudden deaths. The old soldier, Gomez Varias, was vexed at their panic and their clamor. "Plague enough have you," said he, "in your journey, from which you cannot fly, do what you may. If you fly from us, whither will you go? You are not on the river banks of Seville, nor in its olive groves." Upon this, the fugitives returned and joined in the prayers for the dead, but would not aid in interring the body, insisting that he had died of the dreaded pestilence.

When the day dawned, they prepared to pass the morass. Eight of the Spaniards, who could not swim, made for the bridge over the deepest part of the morass, and having replaced its railing, carried over the saddles of the horses and the clothes of their

companions. The remainder, perfectly naked, vaulted upon their horses, and endeavored to force them into the water; but it was so cold that they shrank back. They then attached ropes to the halters, and four or five of them swam to the middle of the current to drag the horses after them, while others struck them behind with long poles. The horses, however, planted their feet firmly in the ground, and could not be moved.

Two or three were at length urged into the stream a short distance, but when they came to the deep water, the cold was so great that they turned back, dragging the swimmers after them. For more than three hours they thus labored in vain. At length they succeeded in forcing two horses over, one of which belonged to the leader Juan de Añasco, the other to Gonzalo de Silvestre. Both of these cavaliers, being of the number of those who could not swim, had already passed by the bridge. As soon as their horses were brought over, they saddled and mounted them, to be ready for action should any enemy approach.

Notwithstanding two horses had thus led the way, none other could be prevailed upon, either by coaxing or cudgelling, to follow. Gomez Arias, the hardy and weather-beaten soldier, was chief of the nineteen companions who, entirely naked, were laboring up to their waists in water, to compel the horses to cross; and Arias had toiled more than all the rest. They had now been in the water for more than four hours, exposed to the keen north wind, and so thoroughly chilled that their naked bodies were almost black. They were wearied in flesh, and vexed in spirit; and seeing all their exertions useless, were almost driven to despair.

At this juncture, Juan de Añasco, having saddled and mounted his horse, as has been stated, advanced on the opposite

side, as far as he could ford, until he reached the edge of the deep channel. He was enraged that no more horses had been made to cross over; and, without inquiring the reason, or regarding the comfortless plight of Gomez Arias and his comrades, attributed it to a want of respect and obedience to him as leader. In great dudgeon at the idea, he cried out in a loud and choleric voice, "Gomez Arias, bad luck to you! why do you not pass those horses over?"

The spleen of honest Gomez, who was a rough soldier, was already sufficiently roused by the toils, and sufferings, and vexations he had endured, and this speech of his commander nettled him to the quick. Casting a grim and surly glance at Añasco, "Bad luck to *you!*" cried he, "and to the drab of a cur that bore you. There you sit on your horse, comfortably clad and wrapped up in your cloak, and never think that we have been here for more than four hours in the water, half frozen with cold, and doing all in our power. Dismount—with a curse to you! and come here, and we shall see how much better you can do than we have done."

Juan de Añasco, though prone to be passionate, recollected himself in his anger, and restrained his tongue. The companions of Gomez Arias told him the true state of the case: he saw that he had been wrong in speaking so abruptly to the veteran, whose rough reply was incited by his vexatious situation, rather than by any personal disrespect.

Juan de Añasco often drew upon himself like rebuffs in this and other expeditions, by the hastiness of his tongue and temper; for there is nothing of which a partisan commander, in these rough adventurous scouting parties, ought to be more observant, than to treat his comrades with kindness and civility. When any toils

and hardships are to be encountered, he should excite them by words; and when it becomes necessary to use the latter, they should be kind and temperate, as they do not cost more than harsh ones, and are infinitely more effectual.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THEY CAPTURE SOME OF THE NATIVES—PERPLEXED WITH FEARS FOR THE SAFETY OF THE GARRISON AT HIRRIHIGUA—THEIR ARRIVAL THERE.

1539.

When the discord was appeased the Spaniards renewed their efforts, and the noontide sun having somewhat tempered the coldness of the water, the horses were slowly forced across, so that by three in the afternoon all had passed over.

They were, indeed, in a wretched plight, drenched with water, worn out with excessive toil, benumbed with cold, exhausted with hunger; and, what was worse, had but scanty provisions wherewith to recruit their strength and spirits. They uttered no complaint or repinings, however, but rejoiced to have crossed this much dreaded pass, and that no enemy had opposed them; for, had but fifty of the savages hemmed them in, where would have been these brave cavaliers? The neglect of the Indians in attacking them was, most probably, owing to the distance of the morass from any hamlet or village, and it was now the winter season, during which time the natives, as they went naked, seldom left their houses.

The Spaniards agreed to pass this night in an extensive

plain, near the morass, for they and their horses were so much fatigued that they could not travel a step. They made large fires, therefore, to warm themselves, and found consolation in the reflection, that from this place to Hirrihigua, whither they were journeying, they would encounter no difficult passes.

When night came they slept with the same precautions as before, and resumed their march before daybreak. In this way they travelled two days without meeting any thing worthy of note. The horses of the two companions who had died went free, saddled and bridled, sometimes following the others, sometimes taking the lead, and keeping as regularly to the route as if they had riders to guide them. The night of the tenth day of their journey was passed within three leagues of the village of Mucozo.

A little past midnight they were again in the saddle. They had not gone far before Pedro Moron, the half-blood, so noted for the quickness of his scent, suddenly cried out. "Take heed! I smell fire at no great distance." They looked about them, but could see nothing of the kind, nor could they perceive the smell of fire.

After proceeding about a league further, Moron again came to a halt. "I am certain," said he, "that there is a fire somewhere, close at hand." They now proceeded warily, keeping a sharp look-out, and after a little while discovered a fire in a forest hard by. Drawing silently near, they perceived a number of Indians, with their wives and children, seated around it, cooking and eating fish. Though they supposed them to be subjects to the friendly cacique Mucozo, they resolved to capture as many as they could, and ascertain whether this chieftain continued at peace with Pedro Calderon. In case he did not, they would be

able to retain them prisoners of war and send them as slaves to Havana. They accordingly dashed forward to surround them. The savages started up on hearing the sudden tramp of the horses, and made for the woods. Many eluded pursuit in the darkness of the night, and many escaped in the thickets. They took prisoners about twenty persons, women and children; who continually called out the name of Ortiz, desiring to remind the Spaniards of the past kindness of their cacique. But these availed nothing; they were detained prisoners.

The half starved Spaniards, without dismounting, made a greedy meal on the fish, not waiting to cleanse them from the sand with which the trampling of the Indians and the horses had covered them.

Refreshed by their hasty repast, they continued their journey, keeping clear of the village of Mucozo. After travelling five leagues, the horse of Juan Lopez Cacho gave out; having never recovered from his sufferings in crossing the river Ocali. His rider had fared better, having been restored, partly by the sudden alarm in the night, and chiefly, by the natural vigor of his age, being not more than twenty years old. Throughout the residue of the journey he had been as active as any of his companions.

Finding it impossible to get the horse on, although within six leagues of the end of his journey, they left him in a verdant meadow where there was abundance of pasturage, and hung his saddle and bridle in a tree, so that any Indian who should use him, might have him with his furniture. They greatly feared, however, that as soon as the Indians found him they would kill him. After travelling for nearly five leagues, they arrived within a league of the village of Hirrihigua, where they expected to find

Captain Pedro Calderon, with forty horse and eighty foot. They examined the ground narrowly as they rode along, hoping to find some tracks of the horses; for as the village was so near, and the country free from wood, it seemed to them natural that their countrymen should have ridden out as far as this, and even further. Discovering, however, no traces of the kind, they were filled with dismal forebodings, fearing that Calderon and his men had been massacred by the natives, or had left the country in the caravels. In either case, what were they to do? Isolated, as it were, surrounded by enemies, with no bark in which to leave the country, and without the means of building one! To return to the governor, appeared to them impossible, after what they had suffered in coming. As they had discussed their forlorn situation, they unanimously agreed, that if they did not find their companions in Hirrihigua, they would retire into some of the secret fastnesses of the adjacent forests, where there was abundance of grass for the horses. The superfluous horse they would kill, and dry his flesh for food for the journey; and when the other horses had sufficiently recruited, they would attempt to return to the governor. Should they be killed by the road, they would die like true and faithful soldiers; if they arrived safe, they would have accomplished their commander's orders.

With this heroic resolve they pushed on; the further they advanced, however, the more were they confirmed in their fears and suspicions; for they discovered no trace of their comrades. At length, they came to a small lake, which was less than half a league from the village. Here they found fresh tracks of horses, and near the water, marks of their countrymen having made lye and washed their clothes there.

A joyful shout burst from the lips of every Spaniard. The horses were dragging wearily along, but the moment they scented the traces of the others, they threw up their heads, pricked their ears, and neighed loud and shrill, plunging and leaping about as if just from the stable: setting off now at a round rate, they soon accomplished the remainder of their journey.

The sun was setting as they came in sight of the village. The night patrol were defiling out two by two, on horseback, with lance and shield, and shining armor. Juan de Añasco and his followers fell into the same order, and, as if they were tilting in the lists, they advanced at a furious gallop, rending the air with joyous shouts. Pedro Calderon and his men sallied out to meet them, and received them with open arms. Instead of inquiring, however, after the health and welfare of the army and the governor, and their particular friends, they anxiously demanded whether there was any gold in the country.

Añasco, without delay, inquired of Calderon whether the natives of this province, and the vassals of Mucozo, had continued peaceable and friendly; and learning that they had, he directed that the prisoners recently taken should be immediately liberated, and sent home to their country loaded with presents. By them he sent an invitation to Mucozo to make him a visit with a train of attendants, to convey to their homes the sea-stores and other articles which, on their departure, they intended leaving behind: at the same time he recommended to his care the horse which had been left in his territory.

The Indians went away, delighted with this kind treatment, and on the third day came the good Mucozo, followed by his warriors and a train of attendants; two of whom led the horse, while the others carried the saddle and bridle, as they knew not

how to use them. Mucozo embraced Añasco and his comrades, inquired particularly after the governor and the army, and made him relate the particulars of their going and coming, their battles and skirmishes, and the toils, the hunger and privations they had suffered. After hearing the whole detail, he observed that he would rejoice much if he could impress his spirit and will upon the other caciques throughout the land, that all might serve the governor and his people as they merited and he desired.

Juan de Añasco was struck with the difference between the reception he met with from this noble cacique, and that from his own countrymen, whose first inquiry had been after gold. With a grateful heart, he thanked him for the kindness he had shown Calderon and his soldiers, and delivered him many kind messages from the governor.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AÑASCO SAILS IN QUEST OF THE BAY OF AUTE.— GOMEZ ARIAS EMBARKS FOR THE HAVANA; AND CALDERON PREPARES TO MARCH TO JOIN THE ARMY.

1539.

JUAN DE ANASCO now set to work to discharge the duties of his mission. He was to embark in the two brigantines, and to coast to the westward until he should arrive at the Bay of Aute (St. Marks), which he had discovered with so much toil, as has been already related. He brought orders, also, from the governor to Captain Pedro Calderon, to rejoin him with his troops, by land; and the worthy cavalier Gomez Arias was to sail for Havana in the caravel, to carry news to Doña Isabel de Bobadilla of the events of the expedition.

The whole harbor, therefore, was in a bustle. The brigantines and caravel were careened and repaired; the sea-stores, sails, rigging and equipments carried on board, and the crews mustered and embarked. Equal stir was made for the march by land; preparing the furniture for the horses, furbishing up armor and weapons, and culling out every article necessary for the service.

After every thing had been selected that was required either for sea or land, there remained an abundance of all kinds of

articles, which they could not take with them; such as cassava bread, clothing, cuirasses, helmets, bucklers, lances, pikes, beside sea-stores, and quantities of steel and iron, which the generous-spirited governor had provided in such profusion for his expedition. All these superfluous articles they gave to Mucozo, in reward of his constant friendship The cacique found himself suddenly overwhelmed with riches. During four days that he remained at the harbor, and for the residue of the term that the Spaniards sojourned there, his subjects were incessantly busy, going to and fro like ants, bearing off these inestimable presents to his village. Every preparation being made, the crews being embarked, beside thirty soldiers who were distributed in the brigantines and caravel, and twenty Indian women for Doña Isabel,* the different commanders took leave of each other, and of their various comrades. Juan de Añasco made sail in the brigantines in quest of the Bay of Aute; Gomez Arias in the caravel for Havana, and Pedro Calderon prepared to march, as soon as he should have seen them fairly under way.† With this cavalier and his little army we shall keep for the present, hoping to meet with the stout Juan de Añasco at some future day.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, P. ii. L. ii. c. 27.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PRESENCE OF MIND OF THE GARRISON AT HIRRIHIGUA—PEDRO CALDERON SETS OUT TO REJOIN THE GOVERNOR—DESPERATE CONFLICT WITH THE NATIVES IN CROSSING THE GREAT SWAMP.

1539.

No sooner had Añasco and Arias set sail, than Calderon, with a force of seventy horse and fifty foot, sallied out of Hirrihigua, leaving the gardens and the fields they had planted in full and fresh vegetation. They reached the village of the kind Mucozo on the evening of the second day. He came out to welcome them, hospitably quartered them for that night, and the next day escorted them to the frontier of his dominions, where he took leave of them with many expressions of regret.

Pedro Calderon continued his march until evening, when he encamped in a plain skirted by a forest. The night darkened apace, when of a sudden a party of savages rushed into the camp; the Spaniards attacked them, sword in hand, and dispersed and pursued them to the entrance of the woods. No sooner, however, had they returned to the camp than the savages were on their track, and in this manner annoyed them all the night long. During these skirmishes, one of the horsemen pursued an Indian; who, hotly pressed, turned suddenly round with an arrow

fixed in his bow, and drew at the same moment that the horseman threw his lance. The savage fell dead, but not unrevenged; for his arrow pierced the horse's breast and brought him down upon the spot, so that Indian, Christian, and horse rolled together upon the ground.

This Indian must have been one of their chief warriors; for, upon his fall, they all immediately fled into the forest, and were not again seen.

The horse thus slain, was the famous steed of Gonzalo Silvestre. The Spaniards, astonished that this powerful animal should have died so suddenly, merely by the wound of an arrow, opened his body, and found that the dart had penetrated his breast, and passed through his heart to the very entrails—so powerful and adroit were the natives of Florida in the use of the bow.

The next evening the Spaniards slept on the margin of the grand morass, and the following morning traversed it without opposition. They pushed on with forced marches, the horsemen dismounting by turns, and relieving the foot-soldiers. Thus they travelled for several days, without a single brush with the natives finding refreshment and food in the villages. These were all abandoned, and the whole country was as silent as if uninhabited, until they arrived at the warlike province of Apalachee.

Having encamped for a night upon the skirts of the thick forest bordering the morass, they entered on the following morning the narrow defile, half a league in length, through the close woods, and reaching the water, the foot-soldiers passed over the Indian bridge of logs, while the horse swam the deepest part of the channel. Calderon, finding that they had passed over the deepest and most perilous part of the morass, wished to hasten

over the residue. He therefore ordered ten horsemen to take behind them five arquebusiers, and five cross-bowmen, and seize upon the narrow pass through the forest which was on the opposite bank. They set off at full speed through the water, when shrill cries and yells arose from different quarters, and Indians rushed forth from behind bushes, brakes, and the trunks of huge trees, and discharged showers of arrows at them.

In the very first discharge, the horse of Alvaro Fernandez, a Portuguese, was killed, and five others were wounded. The horses, panic-struck with the sudden attack and clamor, turned and fled; their masters could not restrain them. Plunging and rearing in the water, which was up to their breasts, they threw off the foot-soldiers, who were all wounded, as the wheeling of the horse exposed their shoulders to the fire of the enemy. The Indians, perceiving their fall, rushed forward to dispatch them, giving their war-whoop and shout of victory.

The suddenness of the attack, the overthrow of the ten archers, the flight of the horses, the thronging of hordes of savages to the combat, produced a scene of wild confusion. The Spaniards were bewildered, and as the battle was in the water, and the horse could render them no assistance, they were greatly alarmed for the result of the conflict.

The Indians, on the contrary, encouraged by the success of their first efforts, attacked the fallen archers with greater fury. The nearest Spaniards rushed across the bridge to their rescue. On their left advanced a formidable band of savages; about twenty paces before them stalked an Indian, perfectly naked, fearless and bold in his bearing, with a large plume of feathers upon his head. His object evidently was to gain the shelter of a huge tree, which lay between him and the Spaniards, from

behind which he might annoy them, and even prevent their passing. Gonzalo Silvestre, who happened to be near the tree, perceived his intention, and shouted out to Anton Galvon. Galvon was one of those who had been dismounted and wounded, but, like a true soldier, he had kept hold of his cross-bow. He followed behind Silvestre, who shielded him with a quilted garment, which he had found floating in the water: advising him to shoot at none but the leading Indian, who was evidently the chief. In this manner they gained the tree, but the movement did not escape the observation of the savage; he bent his bow, and in the twinkling of an eye sped three arrows. They were sent with unerring aim, but Silvestre received them upon the garment which he used as a shield, which, being wet, proved an effectual defence.

Anton Galvon, who had reserved his fire until the Indian should draw near, now fixed a bolt in his cross-bow, and sent it with such good aim, that it pierced the savage through the breast; the latter staggered a few paces, crying out to his followers, "These traitors have slain me." They rushed up to his aid, received him in their arms with dismal murmurs, and passing him from one to the other, conveyed him from the field of battle.

The combat was not less cruel and bloody in other parts of the morass. A large body of the Indians advanced on the right. A valiant soldier, Andres de Meneses, with ten or twelve others, stood to receive them; Andres received four arrows in his thighs and fell into the water; luckily his large shield covered him, and the enemy, leaving him, fired upon his companions, five of whom were grievously wounded.

The Indians, elated by their successes, considered the victory

is already theirs. The Spaniards were evidently losing ground for only fifty of their number could be brought into the engagement, and the horse could neither render assistance, nor molest the enemy. They fought, however, desperately, for, with them, it was either victory or death. At this critical moment, the news spread among the Indians that their chief was mortally wounded. It gave an immediate check to their ardor, and they began slowly to retreat, though keeping up a constant discharge of arrows.

The Spaniards, perceiving these signs of faltering among their adversaries, now rallied, charged upon them, and drove them out of the morass, pursued them to the narrow defile of the forest, and took possession of the cleared field in which De Soto had formerly encamped.

This the savages had strongly fortified, but had abandoned it to go to the assistance of their chief. Here the Spaniards halted for the night, as the place was strong, and only accessible through the narrow defile. Scarcely a man among them escaped without a wound; and the least injured bound up and dressed the wounds of their comrades. Not an eye was closed this night, every man maintained an anxious vigil, and the savages who hovered around them kept up a dread and dismal howling until break of day.

The lucky shot of Anton Galvon was the salvation of the Spaniards this day; for the proud Indian who was laid low by his bolt, proved to be the chief, whose fall changed the tide of battle in their favor. But for this, every one of them would probably have been massacred.

When morning came, they resumed their march, driving the enemy before them through the defile of the forest. At length

they issued into the open woods, where the enemy availed themselves of the same barriers and palisades which had stood there when De Soto passed. From behind these they would sally out, discharge a shower of arrows, and then retreat—wounding in this way above twenty Spaniards. Every inch of ground was disputed, until, at the end of two leagues, they came to an open plain, where the enemy left them through fear of the cavalry. They now marched on for five leagues, and halted in an open country, that the wounded might have some repose; but as soon as night set in, the Indians again beset the camp with yells and howlings, and bitter, taunting speeches. The little army of Spaniards was worn out by repeated assaults; the horsemen would spring into their saddles and pursue the enemy helter-skelter. The Indians would launch their arrows and then fly in every direction; but only to repeat the same annoyances the moment the troopers returned to the camp.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FIERCE STRUGGLE WITH THE NATIVES AT THE PASSAGE OF A STREAM—ARRIVAL AT THE VILLAGE OF APALACHEE.

1539.

With the day, the Spaniards continued their march, and came to a forest skirting a deep stream, which the Indians had obstructed with palisades, and strong barriers placed here and there. Some of the Spaniards, having formerly passed through this, were enabled to counsel the mode of attack. It was ordered that those on horses should dismount, being better armed than the rest, and that thirty of them, with shields, swords, and hatchets, should go in the vanguard to destroy the barricades. Those lightly armed were to mount the horses, as they were of no use in this pass, and to go with the baggage and serving-men in the centre. The other twenty, who were well armed, were to form a rear-guard. In this order they entered the forest.

The Indians, seeing that the Spaniards were few in number, and could not use their horses, charged with great impetuosity, confident of an easy conquest. The Spaniards forced their way to the palisades, where the battle became obstinate, the one struggling to cut a road, and the others to defend it. While some of the soldiers kept the enemy at bay with their swords, others hacked with their hatchets at the fastenings of wild vines

by which the barriers were fastened as with cords. In this way they demolished them one by one, but at the expense of many grievous wounds. Alvaro Fernandez, the Portuguese, also lost another horse, which was transfixed with arrows.

At length the Spaniards fought their way across this perilous pass, and then travelled with less trouble over the plains, where the enemy avoided them, through fear of the horses. But whenever there were any woods near the road, the Indians were sure to be in ambush, whence they would make their attacks, shouting, and repeating frequently these words, "Where are you going, robbers? we have already killed your chief and all his warriors."

In this manner these one hundred and fifty Spaniards, skirmishing and battling all day, arrived at sunset in Apalachee. They had to travel slowly, on account of the many who were wounded, ten or twelve of whom afterwards died; one of these was Andres de Meneses, a valiant soldier.

As they drew nigh the village, they became exceedingly anxious, for they descried neither man nor horse, nor any sign of life. They felt sure that the yells of the savages must have reached the village, and as their comrades came not out to their assistance, they dreaded lest the boasts of the natives, that they had dispatched De Soto and all his army, should prove true.

They wound slowly into the village, but their anxiety was soon relieved by the sight of the governor, who received them like an affectionate father. They were hailed, too, by their comrades, with shouts of joy, as men risen from the dead; for the Indians, to grieve and alarm De Soto, had assured him that they were all slain by the road—a fate he thought too probable,

when he considered that this little band of a hundred and twenty men had to cut their way through a wilderness in arms, which he, with a force of eight hundred men, had found such difficulty in passing.

Among the first to greet Pedro Calderon on his arrival at Apalachee, was Juan de Añasco. This cavalier had made his voyage in the two brigantines, without any adverse accident, and arrived safely in the Bay of Aute on the 29th of December.* The governor had calculated the probable time it would take for Añasco to make his journey and his voyage, and had taken precautions accordingly. For twelve days before his arrival, companies of horse and foot marched and countermarched between the camp and the bay, so that while one body was advancing towards the fort, the other was returning. In this way they kept the road clear of the enemy, and, when at the bay, placed their standards in the highest trees, that they might be readily descried from the sea.

Juan de Añasco saw them, landed confidently and without molestation, and, leaving his brigantines well manned in the bay, came up under the escort of the companies to the camp.

It was a great gratification for Añasco and Calderon to meet each other, and be once more united to the governor and their other brother officers and soldiers. Companionship in toils and dangers had attached them strongly to each other, and the proofs they had of each other's fortitude and valor made them ready, when together, to brave the greatest perils and hardships. Thus happily united, a little fraternity in arms, in the midst of a hostile wilderness, this band of adventurous Spaniards passed their winter cheerily together in the village of Apalachee.

* Portuguese Relation, c. 12.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE EXPLORING EXPEDITION OF DIEGO MALDONADO.

1539.

A FEW days after the arrival of Juan de Añaseo, the governor called to him the hardy and trusty Diego Maldonado, and, advising him to leave his own band of followers under the command of his comrade, Juan de Guzman, ordered him to speed to the Bay of Aute, set sail with the brigantines, and explore the coast to the westward, taking note of all its rivers, bays, and harbors.

Maldonado set sail as directed, and coasted along to the west for seventy leagues, when he discovered a very beautiful harbor, called Achusi.* It was land-locked and completely sheltered from all winds, ample enough for a fleet to ride in, and its shores so bold, that a vessel might anchor near the land.

The natives invited him on shore with many proffers of hospitality. Seeing he mistrusted them, they came, without hesitation, on board of the brigantines, and traded with the Spaniards, bringing them whatever they demanded. This friendly inter-

* The present Bay of Pensacola. Vide Martin's Louisiana, Vol. i. p. 10. The Portuguese narrator calls this port Ochuse, and says that Maldonado set out by land, with a detachment of fifty foot-soldiers, and marched along the coast until he discovered the bay. We follow the Inca's account, which is adopted by Herrera and others.

course gave Maldonado opportunities to go about in his small boats, to take soundings, and note all the advantages of the bay. The cacique, moved by the representations his subjects brought of the brigantines, and relying on the good faith of the strangers, in a luckless hour ventured on board. The Spaniards, having made all the necessary observations, and being apprised of the rank of one of their visitors, hastily weighed anchor; thus requiting the hospitality of the simple-hearted natives by treacherously bearing away their cacique prisoner. In two months from the time of his departure, Maldonado was again at the camp.

De Soto was rejoiced at the accounts given of the Bay of Achusi. It was the kind of seaport required for his projected empire; and where he might receive the reinforcements and supplies from Havana, necessary to the prosecution of his grand scheme of conquest and colonization. It was now the latter part of February; he dispatched Maldonado in the brigantines to Havana, to proclaim his success, and to return with those vessels, the caravel of Gomez Arias, and any other shipping he could purchase, well freighted with clothing, weapons and ammunition of all kinds. Gomez Arias was likewise to return with him, as De Soto had a great opinion of his prudence and sagacity in council, and his hardihood, perseverance, and intrepidity in warfare. They were to rendezvous in the bay of Achusi in the following month of October, at which time De Soto proposed to meet them there, having, in the interim, made a circuit through the interior of the country, to explore the surrounding provinces.*

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. ii. L. ii. c. 23.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

STRANGE ADVENTURES THAT BEFELL THE SPANIARDS WHILE WINTERING IN APALACHEE.

1539.

The natives of Apalachee were a race large of stature, of amazing vigor of arm and intrepidity of spirit, and seemed to delight in war. During the whole winter they kept up alarms by day and night, never ceasing from stratagems and assaults; but the vigilance and promptness of the governor, and his great skill in Indian warfare, foiled every attempt of consequence. They never pretended to oppose any body of soldiers drawn up in squadron, but roved in bands about the forest to surprise foraging parties, or lurked about among thickets to cut off any stragglers from the camp.

If a small party repaired to the forest to cut wood, the sound of their axes would sometimes attract a host of foes, who, coming upon them by stealth, would surround and massacre them, break the chains of the Indian prisoners who had been brought to carry away the wood, and bear off the scalps of the slain as trophies wherewith to decorate their bows. In this way they picked off more than twenty soldiers, and rendered the vicinity of the village so dangerous, that the Spaniards rarely ventured to any distance unless well armed and in strong parties. One day, however,

Juan de Añasco and six other cavaliers, while riding about the village, chatting familiarly, extended their ride into the adjacent fields. Not intending to venture far, and being in a negligent mood, they wore no defensive armor, nor any weapons but their swords, excepting one of their number named Estevan Pegado, who had a helmet and lance.

Thus sauntering along, conversing, they spied in a glade of the woods hard by, a male and female Indian, and spurred forward to make them prisoners. The female was so terrified at sight of the horses, that she stood like one petrified. The husband seized her in his arms, ran with her to the woods, and thrust her among the bushes; then, seeming to scorn flight, he returned to where he had left his bow and arrows, and seizing them up, made face against the enemy.

The Spaniards were pleased with his spirit, and determined to take him alive. Rushing upon him, therefore, before he had time to discharge an arrow, they threw him down, and crowded upon him to prevent his rising, while Estevan Pegado with his lance kept him to the ground. The harder he was pressed the more furious he became. He writhed and struggled under the horses' feet, and wounded them in the flanks and belly with thrusts of his bow. At length, with a desperate effort, he sprang on his feet, seized his bow in both hands, and dealt Estevan Pegado such a blow across the forehead that the blood streamed down his face. "Plague on it," cried Pegado, "if we treat this savage thus daintily, he will kill us all seven." So saying, he rose in his stirrups, thrust his lance through the breast of the Indian, and pinned him dead to the earth.

In this rough affray all the horses were more or less wounded, and two of them afterwards died of his wounds. The cavaliers

returned to the camp, wondering at the temerity and prowess of the savage, and not a little ashamed to confess that one single Indian had treated them so roughly.

At another time, a party of twenty horse and fifty foot sallied out on a foraging expedition to gather maize. After collecting an ample supply, they placed themselves in ambush in a hamlet about a league from their quarters, in hopes of entrapping some Indians. In the highest part of what appeared to be a temple, they placed a sentry, who after some time descried an Indian moving stealthily across the public square; casting around furtive glances, as if he dreaded a concealed foe.

The sentinel gave the alarm, and Diego de Soto, nephew to the governor, one of the best soldiers in the army, and an excellent horseman, spurred into the square to capture him. Diego Velasquez, master of the horse to the governor, followed at a distance on a hand-gallop, to aid De Soto in case of need.

The Indian, seeing them approach, trusted for safety to that fleetness of foot for which his countrymen were remarkable. Finding, however, that the horse gained upon him, he took refuge under a tree, as the natives were accustomed to do, when they had no lances to defend them from the horses. Here, fixing an arrow in his bow, he awaited the approach of the enemy. Diego de Soto came galloping up to the tree, but, not being able to ride under it, wheeled close alongside and made a thrust with his lance over his left arm at the Indian as he dashed by. The latter evaded the blow, and, drawing his arrow to the head, let fly at the moment that the horse was abreast of him. The shaft buried itself just between the girth and the stirrup leather; the horse went stumbling forward fifteen or twenty paces, and fell dead without further motion.

Diego Velasquez spurred up to the relief of his comrade, and, brushing by the tree, made a lunge with his lance in the same manner. His luck was the same;—the Indian dodged the lance, shot another arrow just behind the stirrup-leather, and sent the horse tumbling forward to take his place beside his companion. The two cavaliers sprang upon their feet, and rushed upon the Indian lance in hand. The savage, however, contented himself with his good fortune, and made off for the woods, just keeping an even pace ahead of them, scoffing and making grimaces, and crying out, "Let us all fight on foot, and we shall then see who is the best." With this taunt he took refuge among the thickets, leaving the cavaliers to mourn over the loss of their steeds.

Some few days after the misfortune of these two horsemen, Simon Rodriguez and Roque de Yelves set out on horseback to gather fruit in the woods skirting the village. Not satisfied with plucking it from the lower branches, seated in their saddles, they climbed the tree to gather it from the topmost boughs, fancying it of better flavor. While thus busied, Roque de Yelves gave the alarm of Indians at hand, and throwing himself from the tree, ran to recover his horse; but an arrow, with a barb of flint, entered between his shoulders and came out of his breast; he stumbled forward and lay stretched upon the ground. Rodriguez was too much terrified to descend. They shot at him like a wild beast, and he fell dead, pierced by three arrows. Scarce had he touched the ground when they scalped him and bore off the trophy in triumph. The arrival of some Spaniards to the rescue saved the scalp of poor Roque de Yelves. He related in a few words the event, and, making confession, immediately expired. The horses of the slain Spaniards fled towards the camp, at the tumult and attack of the Indians. Upon the thigh

of one of them was perceived a drop of blood. He was taken to a farrier, who, seeing that the wound was no greater than that of a lancet, said that there was nothing to cure. On the morning of the ensuing day the horse died. The Spaniards, suspecting that he had been struck by an arrow, opened the body at the wound, and, following the trace of it, found an arrow which had passed through the thigh and the entrails and lodged in the hollow of the breast. They were perfectly amazed at the result of the examination, for an arquebuse could scarce have sent a ball so far.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

TIDINGS OF A GOLD REGION—THE SPANIARDS BREAK UP THEIR WINTER CANTONMENT—A FATAL ENCOUNTER.

1540.

THE governor remained five months in winter quarters; and such was the fertility of the province of Apalachee, and the quantity of beans, pumpkins, maize and various other kinds of grain, pulse and vegetables, besides a variety of fruits, that there was no need of foraging more than a league and a half round the village to find food in abundance, though the force consisted of fifteen hundred persons, including Indians, and above three hundred horses.

During this time De Soto endeavored to collect information respecting the country in the interior, that he might regulate his march in the spring. In the course of the winter two Indian lads of about sixteen years of age were brought to him, who were natives of distant provinces, and had travelled with Indian traders. They offered to guide him to those provinces; and one in particular spoke of a remote province towards the east, called Cofachiqui, governed by a female cacique, whose town was of great size, and who received tribute from all her neighbors. The Spaniards showed him jewels of gold, pieces of silver, and

rings set with pearls and precious stones; and endeavored to ascertain if any of those articles were to be found in Cofachiqui. He gave them no doubt a vague and blundering reply, which they interpreted according to their wishes. They understood him that the chief traffic in that province was in those yellow and white metals,* and that pearls were to be found there in abundance. It was determined, therefore, to march in search of Cofachiqui.

Accordingly, in the month of March (1540) Hernando de Soto broke up his winter cantonment, and proceeded to the northeast. Being apprised that they must travel many leagues through an unpeopled wilderness, the governor ordered his men to provide themselves with provisions. The Indians they had captured and made servants, being exposed naked, and in irons, during the severe cold weather, had nearly all perished, so that each soldier was obliged to carry his supply on his back. After a toilsome march, they arrived on the evening of the third day at a small village called Capachiqui.† It was situated on high ground on a kind of peninsula, being nearly surrounded by a miry marsh, more than a hundred paces broad, traversed in various directions by wooden bridges. The village commanded an extensive view over a beautiful valley, sprinkled with small hamlets. Here the troops remained for three days.

About noon of the second day, five halberdiers of the general's guard sallied from the village, accompanied by two other soldiers, Francisco de Aguilar and Andres Moreno. The latter was a

* The Portuguese narrator asserts, that the lad described the manner in which the gold was digged, melted, and refined, with such accuracy, that those who were experienced in mining declared he must have witnessed the process.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

gay, good humored fellow, and from frequently using the exclamation Angels! was nicknamed Angel Moreno. These boon companions sallied forth, without orders from their superiors, and in a heedless manner, merely to amuse themselves, and take a look at the neighboring hamlets. The five guards were armed with their halberts, Aguilar with his sword and shield, Moreno with a sword and lance. They crossed the bog, and a strip of thickets about twenty paces wide, beyond which was an open country with corn-fields.

Scarce had they advanced two hundred paces, when the ever-watchful Indians sprang out from their lurking places. The startling cries and shouts of both parties roused the soldiers, who were reposing quietly in the village. They took not time to cross by the bridges, but dashed across the swamp, where the water was up to their breasts, and rushed to the rescue. It was too late; the Indians had disappeared; and the five halberdiers lay lifeless upon the ground, each pierced with ten or twelve arrows. Moreno was yet alive, but transfixed with an arrow, barbed with flint, and the moment it was extracted from his breast he expired. Aguilar, who was a hardy soldier, more robust than his companions, had defended himself stoutly; he was alive, though badly wounded, and sadly battered about the head. The Indians, having exhausted all their arrows, had closed with him, and belabored him with their bows. With such might did they wield them, that Aguilar's shield was shivered in pieces, and his skull laid bare.

As they bore him back to the encampment they inquired as to the numbers of the enemy, and he declared there were more than fifty, which he said was the reason why his party had been so suddenly defeated. One day, being nearly recovered from

his wounds, his comrades began to jeer in a rough soldier-like style, asking him whether he had counted the blows he had received, and if they had hurt much. "I counted not the number of the blows," replied Aguilar somewhat crustily, "but you will, one day or other, receive the like, and then you will learn whether they hurt or not." Being further bantered on the subject, he broke forth in testimony of the valor and generosity of the Indian warriors. "You must know," said he, "that a band of more than fifty savages sprang out of the thickets to attack us; the moment, however, they saw that we were but seven, and without our horses, seven warriors stepped forth, and the rest retired to some distance. They began the attack, and as we had neither arquebuse nor cross-bow, we were entirely at their mercy. Being more agile and fleet of foot than our men, they leaped around us like so many devils, with horrid laughter, shooting us down like wild beasts, without our being able to close with them. My poor comrades fell one after the other, and the savages seeing me alone, all seven rushed upon me, and with their bows battered me as you witnessed. I concealed all this before, through a sense of shame; but so it really happened, and may it serve as a warning to you all, never to disobey orders and sally forth in like careless manner."

The story of honest Aguilar had probably received from him a romantic coloring; yet, such instances of magnanimity, or rather bravado, are said to have been common among the warriors of Apalachee. They had great confidence in their own courage, strength, and dexterity, considering themselves equal, if not superior, to the Spaniards, when equally armed, and when the latter were not mounted on their horses: at such times they would often disdain to avail themselves of superior numbers

CHAPTER XL.

RECEPTION OF THE SPANIARDS BY THE NATIVES OF ATAPAHA—THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE PROVINCE OF COFA, AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE.

1540.

Leaving this village, the army in two days crossed the frontier of Apalachee, and entered the province of Atapaha.* It was the custom of the governor, on entering a new province, to lead the way himself, and see every thing with his own eyes, rather than trust to the accounts of others. He accordingly chose forty horse, and seventy foot, well armed with shields, arquebuses, and cross-bows, and penetrated the country in advance of his army. On the morning of the third day, they came in sight of the village of Achese. The Indians had fled to the forests, carrying with them their wives, children, and effects. The horsemen, dashing into the village, made six prisoners, two of whom were warriors that had remained behind to remove the infirm.

The two warriors came into the presence of the governor, with a fearless and lofty demeanor. "What seek you in our land?" said they, not waiting to be questioned; "Peace or

* The river Atapapaha may derive its name from this ancient province.

war?" De Soto replied through his interpreter, Juan Ortiz, "We seek not war with any one, but peace and friendship We are in search of a distant province, and all we ask is food by the road." The warriors instantly offered to supply the wants of the army. They sent two of their companions to their cacique to relate all that they had heard and seen, and charged them to warn all the Indians that they should meet, that the Spaniards came as friends, and were to be received and aided accordingly. On the departure of the three messengers, De Soto ordered the Indians to be set at liberty, and regaled and treated as friends.

De Soto, being rejoined by his army, reposed for three days in this village, and then resumed his march northeast, ascending for ten days along the banks of a river, skirted by groves of mulberry-trees, and winding through luxuriantly fertile valleys.* The natives were peaceable and domestic in their habits, and never broke the peace which they formed with the Spaniards.

On the eleventh day they crossed the boundaries of Atapaha, and entered the province of Cofa,† having, according to custom, sent messengers in advance with proffers of peace to the cacique. This chieftain, in reply, sent a deputation of two thousand Indians to De Soto, with a present of rabbits, partridges, maize, and a great number of dogs. The latter were held in

* Supposed by some to be the Flint river; but Col. Pickett is confident that the village of Apalachee, where the army had wintered, was in the neighborhood of the modern town of Tallahassee, and that, consequently, the Spaniards never touched the Flint river.

† We have followed the Portuguese Narrative here, as the Inca's is evidently in error in making the Spaniards enter the province of Achalaque (the country of the Cherokees) at so early a period. This tribe dwelt much further to the northward on the skirts of the Apalachian Mountains, and was not reached by the Spaniards until a month afterwards. The Portuguese historian calls this province Ocute.

high esteem by the Spaniards; for, next to their want of salt, the greatest cause of suffering was the scarcity of meat. Game was abundant, and amply furnished the natives with food, for they were very skilful in the use of the bow and arrow, and very expert in making all kinds of traps. The Spaniards, however, being constantly on the march, had no time for hunting; and, moreover, dared not to leave their ranks for fear of falling into some ambush of the enemy.

The cacique of Cofa received the Spaniards with a generous welcome, giving up his own mansion to the governor, and providing quarters to the army. The province over which he ruled was very fertile, plentiful, and populous. The natives were peaceful and domestic in their habits, and extremely affable. They treated these strangers with much kindness, and detained them five days with their hospitality.

The Adelantado had brought with him, thus far, a piece of ordnance, but finding it exceedingly burthensome and of little use, he determined to leave it with the cacique. That the natives might have some idea of its use, he ordered it to be loaded, and pointed at a huge oak without the village. In two shots, the tree was laid prostrate, to the infinite amazement of the cacique and his subjects.

De Soto told them he left this wonderful machine, as a reward for their friendship and kind hospitality; to be taken care of until he should return or send for it. The cacique and his warriors were deeply impressed with this mark of confidence, and promised that it should be guarded with vigilant care.

On the sixth day the army resumed their march in quest of the adjoining province of Cofaqui, whose cacique was an elder brother of Cofa's, and was much more opulent and powerful.

Cofa and his warriors escorted the army during one day's march, and would have continued to the frontier, but the governor would not give his assent. The cacique, having taken an affectionate leave of the Spaniards, ordered his people to accompany the strangers, and do all in their power to serve them. At the same time, he directed a chief to go before, and warn his brother Cofaqui of the approach of the Spaniards, and beseech him to receive them kindly. The Adelantado continued his march through a pleasant and luxuriant country, fertilized by many rivers, and inhabited by a more docile and gentle race than any he had yet seen. At the end of six days he bid adieu to the territory of Cofa.*

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

CHAPTER XLI.

RECEPTION OF THE ARMY BY THE CACIQUE.— PREPARATIONS FOR PENETRATING TO THE PROVINCE OF COFACHIQUI.

1540.

The moment the cacique Cofaqui received the message of his brother, he dispatched four chieftains, with a train of Indians, to welcome the Spaniards to his dominions.

This message diffused joy throughout the whole army. They marched cheerily forward, and soon came to the confines of Cofaqui, where they dismissed the Indians of Cofa. When the cacique knew by his scouts that the Christians were near, he went out to receive them with a retinue of warriors, richly decorated, with bows and arrows in their hands, tall plumes upon their heads, and over their shoulders rich mantles of martin skin, finely dressed. Many kind words were exchanged, the Indians and Spaniards unsuspiciously mingled together, and entered the village with joyous shouts. The cacique conducted the governor to his own house, and retired himself to a neighboring hamlet.

Early the next morning the cacique came to visit De Soto. He freely imparted every information respecting his own territory, and spoke of a plentiful and populous province, called

Cosa, which lay to the northwest.* As to the province of Cofachiqui, he said that it lay contiguous to his dominions, but that a vast wilderness of seven days' journey intervened.† Should the governor, however, persist in seeking it, he offered to send a band of his warriors to accompany him, and promised to furnish him with all necessary supplies for the journey. De Soto had fixed his mind too intently on Cofachiqui to be diverted from his course, and signified his intention of continuing on. Scouts were accordingly sent out in every direction, to assemble the Indians, and in four days the village was thronged with them. Four thousand warriors were to escort and guide the Spaniards, and four thousand retainers to carry their supplies and clothing. The chief articles of provisions were maize, dried plums, grapes, walnuts, and acorns; for the Indians had no domestic animals, and depended for flesh upon the produce of the chase.

The Spaniards, seeing themselves surrounded by such a multitude of Indians, although they were assembled for their service, kept a vigilant and unremitting watch by day and by night, lest, under the guise of friendship, they should attempt their destruction. But it soon appeared that these troops were destined for warfare in another quarter. A few days before the time appointed for the departure of the Spaniards, the general and his officers being in the public square, the cacique ordered his chief warrior to be called. "You well know," said he to him, "that a perpetual enmity and warfare has existed between our fathers and the Indians of Cofachiqui. That bitter hatred, you are aware, has not abated one jot; the deep wrongs, the notorious injuries we have suffered from that vile tribe still

* Portuguese Relation, c. 14. † Garcilaso de la Vega, iii. c. 4.

rankle in our hearts, unrevenged! The present opportunity must not be lost!

You, the leader of my warriors, must accompany this chief and his braves, under their protection to wreak vengeance on our enemies! I need say no more to you, I leave our cause and our honor in your hands!"

CHAPTER XLII.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CHIEFTAIN PATOFA. — THE INDIAN BOY PEDRO HAS A MARVELLOUS VISITATION.

1540.

The Indian leader, whose name was Patofa, was of a graceful form and striking features. His expression was haughty and noble, promising dauntless courage for war, and gentleness and kindness in peace. His whole demeanor showed that the cacique had not unwisely bestowed his trust. He rose, and throwing aside his mantle of skin, seized a broadsword made of palmwood, which a servant carried behind him, as a badge of his rank. He cut and thrust with it, as skilfully as a master of fence, much to the admiration of the Spaniards. After going through many singular evolutions, he stopped suddenly before the cacique and made a profound reverence. "I pledge my word," said he, "to fulfil your commands as far as in my power; and I promise, by the favor of the strangers, to revenge the insults, the deaths, and the losses, our fathers have sustained from the natives of Cofachiqui. My vengeance shall be such, that the memory of past evils shall be wiped away for ever. My daring to reappear in your presence, will be a token that your commands have been executed. For, should the fates deny my hopes, never again shall you behold me, never again shall the sun shine upon me!

If the enemy deny me death, my own hand will find the road! I will inflict upon myself the punishment my cowardice or evil fortune will merit!"

The cacique Cofaqui rose and embraced him. "I consider," replied he, "what you have promised as certain as though it were already accomplished, therefore reward you, as for services already rendered." Saying this, he took from his shoulders a mantle of beautiful martin skins, and placed it with his own hand upon the shoulders of Patofa. A present of a mantle or plume, or any other article of dress, was considered by the natives of this country as the greatest honor their chief could confer upon them, more especially when presented in person.*

A singular event happened the night before the departure of the army. One of the two boys taken prisoner in the province of Apalachee had guided them thus far. The other, whom they named Pedro, was to conduct them thence to the dominions of Cofachiqui, where they expected to find gold, silver, and precious stones. About the mid watch, this youth woke the soldiery with his screams of murder, and calls for help. The alarm spread throughout the encampment; they dreaded some treachery of the Indians; the trumpets sounded to arms; all was tumult; they buckled on their armor, seized their weapons, and prepared for action. When it was discovered that no enemy was at hand, an inquiry was made whence the alarm had proceeded. They found the Indian boy Pedro half dead, trembling with fear and terror, and foaming at the mouth like a maniac. When they asked him why he had called for help with such strange outcries, he said that a demon, with a huge visage, accompanied by frightful imps, had appeared, and forbidden him, under pain of death,

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. iii. c. 5.

to guide the Spaniards to the land he had promised; at the same time they had dragged him out of his hut and beat him, until he was so bruised and weakened that he could not move. He added, that the demon, seeing the Christians approach, had vanished with all his imps—he knew from this, that the devils feared the Christians, and begged they would baptize him immediately, lest the demon should return and kill him.

The Spaniards were perplexed by this story, which seemed to be corroborated by the contusions and swellings on the boy's face and body. The priests, being called in, baptized him, and remained with him during this night and the following day, to confirm him in the faith.* As the boy proved to be an elaborate liar on various occasions, the foregoing tale may be considered a marvel of his own invention. The cacique accompanied the army two leagues on their march, when, charging Patofa anew faithfully to serve the Spaniards, he took an affectionate leave and returned to his home.

* The Portuguese narrator says the Gospel was read over him and he recovered.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE DESERTION OF AN INDIAN, AND HOW HE WAS PUNISHED—THE ARMY LOST IN A TRACKLESS WILDERNESS.

1540.

The Spaniards marched by themselves, formed into squadrons, with a van and rear-guard. Patofa and his four thousand warriors marched in like order, with the Indians who carried the provisions in the centre; for the natives sought eagerly to rival the white men in every thing relating to the art of war.

By night, likewise, they lodged separately, and as soon as the Indians who carried the supplies had delivered up the provisions to the Spaniards, they went away and slept with their companions. Both armies posted their sentinels, and they watched each other, as though they were enemies. The Spaniards were particularly vigilant; for, seeing the order and regularity observed by the Infidels, they mistrusted them. The latter, however, were entirely free from any evil designs, and rather manifested a desire to please the strangers in every thing. The stationing of sentinels and other camp forms observed by them, were more to prove themselves men accustomed to war, than through any doubts of the Spaniards. These precautions they observed the whole time they were together. The second night of their march, they slept

at the commencement of an extensive uninhabited tract lying between the provinces of Cofaqui and Cofachiqui.

The country upon which they now entered, though deserted, was pleasant, diversified with easy hills, open forests, and frequent streams.

On the fourth day an Indian deserted, and made off in the direction of his home. Patofa immediately sent four young warriors in pursuit of him, with orders to bring him back manacled. They set off with the swiftness of deer, and soon returned, bringing him prisoner. Patofa ordered him to be led to the banks of a small stream that flowed through the encampment. Here he was stripped, and commanded to throw himself upon the ground and drink the streamlet dry. The poor culprit drank until he could no more, but the moment he raised his head from the stream, five Indians who were posted over him, with clubs in their hands, belabored him cruelly until he resumed his task. Some of his comrades hastened to the governor, and implored him to intercede with Patofa, or the poor wretch would be compelled to drink until he died. The intercessions of the governor were effectual; the prisoner was released, but was half dead with the quantity of water he had been forced to swallow.

In the course of their march through this unpeopled tract of country, they came to two rivers, a cross-bow shot broad, and so deep and rapid, that the infantry could not maintain their footing. They made, therefore, a kind of dam by placing their horses side by side across the stream, to break its fury, until the foot-soldiers and Indians had forded it.

About noon on the seventh day, their march was arrested, and the whole army thrown into confusion by the sudden termination of the broad road which they had followed thus far. They

pursued many narrow winding paths leading into dense and tangled forests. These after being followed for a short distance would likewise entirely disappear.

Their Indian allies were here quite as much at loss, not one of them being able to point out the proper path. De Soto then ordered Patofa into his presence. "Why," said he to him, "have you under the mask of friendship led us into this wilderness, whence we can discover no way of extricating ourselves? I will never believe, that among eight thousand Indians there is not one to be found capable of showing us the way to Cofachiqui. It is not at all likely that you, who have maintained perpetual war with that tribe, should know nothing of the public road and secret paths leading from one village to another."

Patofa replied that neither he nor any of his followers had ever been in this place before. "The wars," said he, "which have been waged between these two provinces, have not been carried on by pitched battles, nor invasions of either party; but by skirmishes between small bands, who resort to the streams and rivers we have crossed, to fish; and also by combats between hunting parties; as the wilderness we have traversed is the common hunting-ground of both nations. The natives of Cofachiqui are more powerful and have always worsted us in fight; our people, therefore, were dispirited and dared not to pass over their own frontiers. Do you suspect that I have led your army into these deserts to perish? If so, take what hostages you please. If my head will suffice, take it—if not, you may behead every Indian, as they will obey my mandate even to the death."*

The frank and feeling manner in which these words were delivered, convinced the governor of Patofa's truth and trustwor-

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. iii. c. 6.

thiness. He then called to him Pedro, the Indian boy who had guided them thus far, with such a perfect knowledge of the country, that, the evening previous, he had pointed out exactly where they would find the road on the following morning. De Soto threatened to throw him to the dogs for thus deceiving him. The boy, however, appeared to be really bewildered, and seemed to have suddenly lost all his former sagacity; he said it was four or five years since he had travelled through the wilderness, and he could not now tell where they were.

They resumed their march, wandering through the glades and openings of the forest, and at sunset were arrested by a wide, deep, and unfordable river. This sight filled them with dismay. They had neither rafts nor canoes with which to cross the stream, nor food to keep them alive while these were being constructed. Their provisions were consumed, as they had only brought supplies for the seven days, which it had been computed they would take to traverse the desert. The road lost, without a guide, without food, before them a deep impassable river, behind them an uninhabited wilderness, and on each side a trackless forest! Their situation was indeed dreary and disheartening.

CHAPTER XLIV.

PARTIES DISPATCHED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS TO SEEK SOME OUTLET TO THIS WILDERNESS—SUFFERINGS OF THE ARMY FOR WANT OF FOOD—SUCCESS OF JUAN DE AÑASCO'S EXPEDITION.

1540.

The governor left the army encamped in a grove of pine-trees, and, taking a guide and a detachment of horse and foot, struck into the depths of the forest. He returned late in the evening, greatly perplexed and troubled, having penetrated five or six leagues into the wilderness without discovering any signs that the country was inhabited.

Early the following morning he called a council of his officers to consider the critical situation of the army, and decide whether they should turn in another direction, or retrace their steps. Their supplies of maize were exhausted; both horse and rider were way-worn, dispirited and enfeebled for want of food, and it was extremely doubtful whether they would be able to reach a place of refreshment; moreover, the Indians, taking advantage of their weakened condition, might assail them, so that their return would probably be in the face of both war and famine. It was resolved, therefore, not to move their encampment until some road or outlet from this wilderness should be discovered. The governor then dispatched parties of troopers in every direc-

tion to seek for some habitation. These returned at nightfall, some leading their wearied horses by the bridle, others driving them before them, having discovered neither road nor human dwelling.* De Soto then ordered four bands of horse and two of foot to start, two up the course of the river, and two down it; one party keeping along the bank, and the other a league inland, in hopes that one or the other would find a road or an inhabited place. He directed each of the captains to return in five days.

Captain Juan de Añasco, who commanded one of the detachments, was accompanied by Patofa, who was unwilling to remain in the camp, and the Indian boy, Pedro, who, abashed at having lost the road, thought that by going on this expedition he might succeed in redeeming his character. With each company of Spaniards went a thousand Indian warriors, who scattered themselves about the forests to seek for a road.

The governor remained on the bank of the river waiting their return, where he and his people suffered great distress for want of food; having little to eat excepting the tendrils of wild vines, which they found in the woods. The four thousand Indians who remained with him sallied out every morning, and returned at night, some with herbs and roots that were eatable, others with fish; and others, again, with birds and small animals killed with their bows and arrows. All of these they brought to the army; and although they were exhausted, and almost famished themselves, yet such was their fidelity and respect that they tasted nothing until they had first presented what they had to the Spaniards. The hardy soldiers were touched by this generosity of spirit, and gave the Indians the greater part of the

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14.

food they brought. These supplies, however, were by no means sufficient for the subsistence of such a multitude.

During three days the army suffered extreme privations. The governor, finding they could no longer endure this excess of hunger, ordered some of the hogs which they had brought with them for the breed to be killed, and half a pound of meat was portioned out to each Spaniard; which, however, rather served to augment than to allay the hunger of half-famished men. Notwithstanding their pressing wants, they generously divided their pittance with the poor savages, whose necessities were equally great.

De Soto fared equally with his men in every respect; and though troubled and anxious for the fate of his great expedition, he wore a sunny countenance to cheer up his followers. These chivalrous spirits appreciated his care and kindness, and, to solace him, they concealed their sufferings, assumed an air of contentedness, and appeared as happy as though they were revelling in abundance.

In the mean time, the four captains who went in search of a road, suffered no less from hunger than the governor and his army. Juan de Añasco, having travelled three days along the river, came to a small village seated on its banks.* Here he found few natives, but a great supply of food; in one house alone were deposited five hundred measures of meal, formed from toasted maize, beside much more in grain. The joy of both Indians and Spaniards can easily be imagined. After having searched the houses, they ascended into the highest, from which they could see that further on the country was

* The Portuguese narrator says the Indians called this hamlet Aymay, and the Spaniards gave it the name of the "Village of Good Relief."

studded with villages and hamlets, with extensive corn-fields on every side. They here quelled the cravings of hunger. After midnight they dispatched four horsemen to the governor with tidings of their success. They took with them many ears of corn, and several horns of the buffalo or bison. The sight of the latter perplexed the Spaniards, who conjectured them to be the horns of tame cattle. Several times in the course of their expedition they had found fresh beef, and had importuned the Indians to tell them where they kept their herds. They could never get any satisfactory information from them on the subject, and supposed that they purposely concealed the truth.

Patofa and his Indians this night stole stealthily out of the camp, so as not to alarm the Spaniards, and sacked and pillaged the temple. They massacred every Indian they found within and in the purlieus of the village, sparing neither sex nor age, and taking their scalps as trophies, to show their cacique, Cofaqui; for it was afterwards discovered that this village was in the long-wished-for province of Cofachiqui.

On the following day, at noon, Añasco set forward to meet the governor, not daring to await his arrival in the village, fearing a general assault from the natives, in revenge of the massacre of Patofa.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE HALF-FAMISHED ARMY REVIVED BY THE TIDINGS OF AÑASCO'S DISCOVERY OF AN ABUNDANT REGION—THE RAVAGES COMMITTED BY PATOFA AND HIS WARRIORS—DE SOTO'S RECEPTION BY THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS OF COFACHIQUI.

1540.

THE four horsemen sent as messengers reached the army in one day; a distance of twelve leagues, which they had previously spent three days in traversing The news they brought diffused new life among the troops, and they were as wild with joy as if rescued from the jaws of death. When morning dawned, De Soto ordered the four troopers to lead on to the village they had discovered. Before decamping, however, they buried a letter at the root of a tree, and cut upon the bark these words: "Dig at the root of this pine, and you will find a letter." This was to make known to the other captains, who were seeking a road, the direction the army had taken.*

The idea of plenty of food revived the half-famished troops: they clapped spurs to their steeds, and rode helter-skelter through the forest, each one striving to pass the other; so that before noon on the following day they were all within the vil-

* Portuguese Narrative, c 14.

lage. Here the governor concluded to halt for some days, that his men might recruit their strength, and likewise to await the arrival of the three other captains, who had been sent in quest of a road.

These three captains had the good fortune to find the letter of their comrades, and, with their different detachments, joined the main body in the course of four days, almost famished; having, during these eight days' absence, had nothing to eat but a scant supply of roots and herbs.

De Soto sojourned in this frontier village of the province of Cofachiqui seven days; during which time Patofa and his warriors were not idle, but, sallying forth stealthily, ravaged the country for leagues round about, slaying and scalping man, woman, and child, sacking and pillaging villages and hamlets, temples and sepulchres, and refraining only from setting fire to them, through fear that the flames might betray their doings to the Spaniards.

When De Soto heard of this cruel ravage, he made all haste to get rid of his bloody allies. Sending for Patofa, he thanked him for his friendly conduct and valuable escort; and giving him presents of knives, trinkets, and clothing, for himself and his cacique, dismissed him and his followers.

The savage warrior set off on his return, well pleased with the presents, but still more gratified at having fulfilled the vow of vengeance made to his chieftain.

Two days after the departure of Patofa, the Spaniards resumed their march along the banks of the river. They met with no living thing, but with dismal proofs of the dreadful carnage Patofa had committed. All along the way was strown with scalpless corses. The natives had fled into the interior of

the country, leaving a plentiful supply of provisions in the villages.

On the afternoon of the third day, the army halted in a verdant region, covered with mulberry and other fruit-trees, laden with fruit. The governor was unwilling to advance until he learnt what province he was in. He ordered Juan de Añasco, therefore, with thirty foot-soldiers, to pursue the road they had thus far followed, and endeavor to capture some Indians, from whom they might obtain information, and who might serve as guides. To encourage the doughty Añasco, he told him he sent him in preference to any other, because he was always successful.

Añasco and his thirty comrades left the camp on foot, before nightfall. They marched along in profound silence, with the noiseless pace and watchful eye of a marauding party. As they advanced the road grew wider. They proceeded nearly two leagues without seeing a living thing, when on the still night breeze was borne a low, murmuring sound, like the near hum of a village. As they moved breathlessly forward, the sounds grew more distinct; at length they emerged from the thickets which had obstructed their view, and saw lights, and heard the barking of dogs, the cries of children, and the voices of men and women. Certain that a village was near at hand, they rushed forward to seize some Indians, secretly, in the suburbs, each striving to be first, to have the honor of being the most diligent. They were, however, deceived in their hopes, for the river which they had followed flowed between them and the village. They halted a long while on the bank, at what appeared to be a landing-place for canoes, and having supped, and reposed until two o'clock at night, they set off for the camp, where they arrived

a little before daybreak, and related to the governor what they had seen and heard.

When the day dawned, De Soto set out with a hundred infantry, and a hundred horse, to reconnoitre the village. Arrived on the opposite bank, Juan Ortiz, and Pedro, the Indian boy, shouted to the natives to come over, and receive a message for their cacique.

The Indians, terrified at the strange sight of the Spaniards and their horses, ran back to the village to spread the news. In a little while a large canoe was launched, and came directly across the river, managed by several rowers. Six Indians, of noble appearance, all about forty or fifty years of age, landed from it.

The governor, perceiving they were persons of consequence, received them with much ceremony, seated in a kind of chair of state, which he always carried with him for occasions of the kind. As they advanced they made three profound reverences, one to the sun, with their faces to the eastward, the second to the moon, turning to the west, the third to the governor. They then made him the usual demand, "whether he came for peace or war?" He replied, Peace; and a free passage through their lands. He moreover requested provisions for his people, and assistance with canoes or rafts in passing the river.

The Indians replied that there supplies were small, the country having been ravaged by pestilence in the preceding year, so that most of the people had abandoned their houses and villages, and taken refuge in the woods, neglecting to sow their corn. They added that they were governed by a young female, just of marriageable age, who had recently inherited the sway. They would return and repeat to her the circumstances of their inter-

view, and made no doubt, from her discreet and generous nature, she would do every thing in her power to serve the strangers. With these words they departed.

They had not long returned to the village when the Spaniards perceived movements of preparation, and observed a kind of litter borne by four men to the water's side. From this alighted the female cacique, and entered a highly decorated canoe. A kind of aquatic procession was then formed; a grand canoe, containing the six ambassadors, and paddled by a large number of Indians, led the van, towing after it the state bark of the princess, who reclined on cushions in the stern, under a canopy supported by a lance. She was accompanied by eight female attendants. A number of canoes filled with warriors closed the procession.*

The young princess stepped on shore, and as she approached the Spaniards, they were struck with her appearance. She was finely formed, with great beauty of countenance, and native grace and dignity. Having made her obeisance to the governor, she took her seat on a kind of stool placed by her attendants, and entered into conversation with him, all her subjects preserving a most respectful silence.

Her conversation confirmed what had been said by the ambassadors. The province had been ravaged by pestilence during the preceding year, and provisions were very scanty. She offered, however, to share with the strangers a quantity of maize collected for the relief of her village, and to put them in the way of get-

* The account of this princess and her territory, is taken both from the Spanish and Portuguese account. The former is by far the most ample and circumstantial; though evidently inclining to magnify the importance of the princess and her dominions. Biedma says this queen, instead of coming herself, sent one of her nieces.

ting similar supplies from other villages. She proffered, likewise, her own house for the accommodation of the governor, and half of the village for that of his officers and principal soldiers; and promised that wigwams of bark and branches should be put up for the rest. She added, that rafts and canoes should be provided for the army to cross the river on the following day. De Soto was overpowered by the generosity of the princess, and endeavored, in the best manner, to express his sense of her kind and hospitable offers, assuring her of the constant friendship of his sovereign and himself. The cavaliers, too, listened with admiring attention to her discourse, and to the answers she gave to various inquiries concerning her province; leaving them as much charmed with her intelligence and judgment as they had been with her beauty, and wondering to find such dignity and grace, and true politeness, in a savage brought up in a wilderness.

While the princess of Cofachiqui was conversing with the governor, she was slowly disengaging a string of large pearls, which passed three times round her neck, and descended to her waist. The conference ended, she told Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, to present the necklace to the general. Ortiz replied, that the gift would be more valuable if presented with her own hand; but she scrupled to do it, through a dread of infringing the propriety which females should always maintain. When De Soto was apprised of her scruples, he directed Ortiz to tell her, that he would more highly prize the favor of receiving the gift from her own hand, than he would value the jewel itself, and that she would commit no breach of decorum, as they were persons unknown to each other, treating of peace and amity.

This being interpreted to her, she rose, and placed the string

of pearls about the neck of De Soto ;* he likewise stood up ; and, taking from his finger a ring of gold, set with a ruby, presented it to her, as a token of peace and friendship. She received it very respectfully and placed it on one of her fingers. This ceremony ended, she returned to her village, leaving the Spaniards much struck with her native talent, and personal beauty.†

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14. Garcilaso de la Vega, L. iii. c. 11. Biedma, in Recueil de Pièces sur La Floride, par H. Ternaux-Compans.

† According to the Portuguese narrator, the Indians, in this interview, assured the Spaniards that their province was but two days' journey from the sea-coast; but subsequent circumstances gave reason to believe, either that the information was incorrect in itself, or was erroneously rendered by the interpreters.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE ARMY QUARTERED IN THE VILLAGE OF THE YOUNG PRINCESS—AÑASCO DISPATCHED AFTER A CERTAIN RICH WIDOW—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE YOUNG WARRIOR BY WHOM HE WAS GUIDED.

1540.

On the following day, the Indians having constructed large rafts, and brought a number of canoes, the army crossed the river. The passage was not, however, effected without accident. Several of the horses, urged by their riders into the stream, were carried down the current, amid quicksands and whirlpools, and four of them were drowned. Their loss was as much lamented by the Spaniards, as though they had been brothers in arms.

When the army had all crossed, they were lodged partly in wigwams, under the shade of luxuriant mulberry-trees, with which the province abounded. Around the village were scattered many forsaken wigwams; the rank grass growing within, as if they had long been untenanted. A token that the pestilence had, indeed, passed over them.

The province of Cofachiqui, as well as the neighboring provinces of Cofaqui and Cofa, are represented as being extremely populous and fertile. The natives were of a tawny complexion; well formed; frank, gentle, and sincere in their dispositions, and

less warlike than any of the tribes among which the Spaniards had sojourned.

They had their wars, however, with their neighbors, and had many captives among them, whom they employed in cultivating the fields and other servile labor. To prevent their escape and return to their own tribes, they were maimed by having the nerves of the leg cut above the heel or the instep.

In the course of his various inquiries about the affairs of the province, De Soto learnt that the mother of the princess was still living a widow, at a retired place, about twelve leagues down the river. He felt a strong desire to see her, wishing thoroughly to secure the friendship of the people of this province. His desire was probably quickened by learning that the queen-mother had in her possession a large quantity of pearls.

On making known his wishes to the princess, she immediately dispatched twelve of her principal subjects to her mother to entreat her to come and behold these wonderful people, and the strange animals they had brought with them.

The queen-mother, however, refused to accompany the messengers, and expressed herself scandalized at what she termed the levity of her daughter, in so readily showing herself to strangers whom she had never before seen. She rebuked the envoys for having permitted such a departure from her proper dignity; and manifested in various ways the chagrin which prudish dowagers are somewhat prone to indulge in like cases.

The governor hearing of this, called to him the stout Juan de Añasco, who was the very man for undertakings of the kind, and ordered him to take thirty companions and depart for the retreat of this coy widow; and by fair and gentle means prevail upon her to come to the encampment.

Juan de Añasco and his comrades set off at once on foot, although the morning was already somewhat advanced. They were guided by a youthful warrior, whom the princess had granted them for the purpose. This youth was a near relative to the widow, and had been reared by her; and, being kind and noble in his nature, was as dear to her as though he were her own son. For this reason her daughter had chosen him to accompany the Spaniards; and had instructed him to go in advance of them when they approached the residence of her mother, to secure for them a favorable reception.

He showed indeed, in countenance and bearing, his generous blood. He was about twenty-one years of age, with handsome features, and a vigorous and graceful form. His head was decorated with lofty plumes of different colored feathers, he wore a mantle of dressed deer-skin; in his hand he bore a beautiful bow, so highly varnished as to appear as if finely enamelled; and at his shoulder hung a quiver full of arrows. With a light and elastic step, and an animated and gallant air, his whole appearance was that of an ambassador, worthy of the young and beautiful princess whom he served.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE MELANCHOLY FATE OF THE YOUNG INDIAN GUIDE—AÑASCO MAKES ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THE OLD PRINCESS.

1540.

Juan de Añasco and his comrades having proceeded nearly three leagues, stopped to make their mid-day meal, and take their repose beneath the shade of some wide-spreading trees, as the heat was oppressive. The Indian guide had proved a cheerful and joyous companion, entertaining them all the way with accounts of the surrounding country and the adjacent provinces. On a sudden, after they had halted, he became moody and thoughtful, and, leaning his cheek upon his hand, fell into a reverie, uttering repeated and deep-drawn sighs. The Spaniards noticed his dejection, but, fearing to increase it, forbore to demand the cause.

After a time he quietly took off his quiver, and placing it before him, drew out the arrows slowly, one by one. They were admirable for the skill and elegance with which they were formed. Their shafts were reeds. Some were tipped with buck's-horn, wrought with four corners, like a diamond; some were pointed with the bones of fishes, curiously fashioned; others with barbs of the palm, and other hard woods; and some were

three-pronged. They were feathered in a triangular manner, to render their flight of greater accuracy.

The Spaniards could not sufficiently admire their beauty; they took them up, and passed them from hand to hand, examining and praising their workmanship and extolling the skill of their owner. The youthful Indian continued thoughtfully emptying his quiver, until, almost at the last, he drew forth an arrow with a point of flint, long and sharp, and shaped like a dagger; then, casting round a glance, and seeing the Spaniards engaged in admiring his darts, he suddenly plunged the weapon in his throat, and fell dead upon the spot.

Shocked at the circumstance, and grieved at not having been able to prevent it, the Spaniards called to their Indian attendants, and demanded the reason of this melancholy act, in one who had just before been so joyous.

The Indians broke into loud lamentations over the corpse; for the youth was tenderly beloved by them, and they knew the grief his untimely fate would cause to both of their princesses. They could only account for his self-destruction by supposing him perplexed and afflicted about his embassy. He knew that his errand would be disagreeable to the mother, and apprehended that the plan of the Spaniards was to carry her off. He alone knew the place of her concealment, and it appeared to his generous mind an unworthy return for her love and confidence thus to betray her to strangers. On the other hand he was aware that, should he disobey the mandates of his young mistress, he should lose her favor and fall into disgrace. Either of these alternatives would be worse than death; he had chosen death, therefore, as the lesser evil, and as leaving a proof to his mistresses of his loyalty and devotion.

Such was the conjecture of the Indians, to which the Spaniards were inclined to give faith. Grieving over the death of the high-minded youth, they mournfully resumed their journey.

They now, however, found themselves at a loss about the road. None of the Indians knew in what part of the country the widow was concealed, the young guide who had killed himself being alone master of the secret. For the rest of that day and until the following noon, they made a fruitless search, taking prisoners some of the natives; who all professed utter ignorance on the subject. Juan de Añasco being a fleshy man and somewhat choleric, was almost in a fever with the vexation of his spirit, the weight of his armor, and the heat of the day; he was obliged, however, to give up the quest after the widow, and to return to the camp much mortified at having for once failed in an enterprise.

Three days after his return, an Indian offered to guide the Spaniards by water, to the retreat of the widow. Añasco accordingly set out a second time, with twenty companions, in two canoes; but at the end of six days returned with no better success. The old princess, having heard of the search made after her, had taken refuge in the depths of a forest which they found it impossible to penetrate. The governor, therefore, gave up all further attempt to obtain an interview with this wary and discreet old widow.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE SPANIARDS WITH RESPECT TO GOLD. THE TREASURE THEY FIND—THEY DISCOVER SOME EUROPEAN RELICS.

1540.

WHILE Juan de Añasco was employed in his search after the widow, the Governor endeavored to inform himself respecting the boasted riches of the province. For this purpose he called to him the two Indian lads who had formerly accompanied traders into this part of the country, and who had told him that their masters had trafficked here for yellow and white metal, similar to the gold and silver shown by the Spaniards, and also for pearls. He made these youths describe the articles to the youthful princess, and begged her, if such yellow and white metals existed in her territories, to have specimens brought to him.

The princess cheerfully complied, and in a little while several Indians appeared, laden with the supposed treasure. To the great disappointment of the Spaniards, however, the yellow metal proved to be a species of copper of a yellowish tint much resembling gold; and the white metal, though a shining substance somewhat of the appearance of silver, was extremely light, and crumbled in the hand like dry earth. Some have supposed it was a species

of quartz, but it is probable that it was mica. Thus vanished of a sudden the golden treasures of Cofachiqui.

To console the Spaniards under their evident disappointment, the princess pointed out a kind of temple or mausoleum, at one end of the village, and informed them that it was the sepulchre of all the chieftains and great warriors of the place, and was adorned within with great quantities of pearls; and that at another village called Talomeco, about a league distant, the ancient seat of territory, was a still larger mausoleum, in which all her ancestors were interred, and which contained still greater quantities of pearls, all which she assured the governor should be entirely at his disposal.

De Soto was in some degree consoled by the news of these immense hoards of pearls for his disappointment in respect to gold; though even as to the latter, many of his followers did not give up their hopes, insisting that there were veins of gold in the copper and brass of the country. They were destitute, however, of aquafortis, or touchstones, to assay them.

Juan de Añasco, the Contador, or royal accountant of the expedition, being absent, the governor deferred visiting the temple until he should be present in his official capacity. In the mean time, he placed trusty persons to keep watch round the edifice by day and night.

As soon as Añasco returned, the governor visited the mausoleum, accompanied by the officers of the royal revenue, and a number of his principal officers and soldiers. These edifices were of great magnitude—that at Talomeco being a hundred paces in length, and forty in breadth, with lofty roofs of reed. At the entrance to this latter temple or mausoleum, were gigantic statues of wood carved with considerable skill, the largest being

twelve feet in height. They were armed with various weapons and stood in threatening attitudes, with ferocious looks. The interior of the temple was likewise decorated with statues of various shapes and sizes, and a great profusion of conchs and different kinds of sea and river shells.

Around the sepulchre were benches, on which were wooden chests, skilfully wrought, but without locks or hinges. In these were the bodies of the departed caciques and chieftains of Cofachiqui, left to their natural decay; for these edifices were merely used as charnel-houses. Beside these chests, there were smaller ones, and baskets wrought of cane, which were filled with valuable furs and Indian robes of dressed skins, and mantles made of the inner rind and bark of trees, and others of a species of grass, which, when beaten, was not unlike flax. There were others formed with feathers of various colors, which the natives wore during the winter. But above all, they contained pearls of every size, and in incredible quantities, together with the figures of children and birds made of pearl. The Portuguese narrator says, they obtained fourteen bushels of pearls, and that the female cacique assured them, if they searched the neighboring villages, they might find enough to load all the horses of the army. Nor is the Inca less extravagant in his account. All this, however, must be taken with a large deduction for the exaggeration with which the riches of the new world were always described by the discoverers, when beyond the power of proof.*

The intendants of the revenue would have made general spoil of these precious articles had not De Soto interfered. He

* Biedma says, there was a great quantity; but that they were spoiled by having been a long time under ground.

represented that they were at present merely discovering the country, not dividing it, and having to make their way through a vast wilderness, it would not do to burden themselves with treasure. They should, therefore, only take specimens of these riches to send to Havana, and leave every thing in the temples in their present state, until they came to colonize and make a settlement, when all should be properly divided, and the fifth of the amount be set apart for the crown. He distributed, how-however, handfuls of large pearls among his officers, exhorting them to make rosaries of them, and permitted the officers of the crown to retain a large quantity which they had already weighed out.

Annexed to this great sepulchre were several buildings, which served as armories, containing weapons of various kinds, all arranged in great order. The whole establishment was maintained with exact care, and evidently was in the charge of numerous attendants.

While ransacking these depositories of arms, the Spaniards, to their astonishment, found a dagger and several coats of mail. Nothing could equal their surprise at meeting with these European relics in the heart of this unknown wilderness. They questioned the Indians eagerly on the subject. The latter informed them that many years before, a number of white men like themselves had landed at a sea-port, about two days' journey from thence. That the commander of the party died soon after landing, whereupon great factions and brawls took place among his followers, for the command, in which several were slain; the rest had reassembled on board of their vessel, and put to sea.*

* We found in the town a dagger and some coats of mail; whereupon the *Indians* told us, that many years before, the Christians had landed in a port

The Spaniards pondered over these facts, and determined that the white men in question must have been the unfortunate Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, and his ill fated followers, and those experienced in maritime affairs gave it as their opinion, that, from the course of the river which passed by Cofachiqui, it must be the same which on the sea-coast was called the St. Helena.†

Elated with the riches they had found, they urged the governor to stop here and create a colony. The country was fertile, they might establish a lucrative pearl fishery, and carry on a trade with Spain from the seaport at the mouth of the river.

De Soto persisted, however, in his original plan of making an exploring tour and meeting Maldonado at the port of Acusi, according to appointment. He observed that the surrounding country would not afford provisions for a month, that it would always be open for them to return to in case they should find none richer, and that, in the mean time, the Indians would sow their land with maize in greater plenty.

After a long sojourn, therefore, in this fertile and opulent province, De Soto prepared for his departure. During the time of his sojourn several broils had taken place between his people and the natives. These had originated in the ill conduct of some

two days' journey from thence (this was certainly *Ayllon*, who undertook the conquest of *Florida*), that the governor died upon his landing, which occasioned great factions, divisions, and slaughter amongst the chief gentlemen that had followed him, every one pretending to the supreme command, so that at length they left the port, and returned to *Spain*, without discovering the country.—*Portuguese Relation*, c. 14.—Lond. 1686. Biedma, in H. Ternaux-Compans, p. 67.

† El rio caudaloso, que pasava por Cofachiqui, decian los hombres Marineros, que entre estos Espanoles iban, que era el que en la costa llamavan de Santa Elena, no porque lo supiesen de cierto, sino que, segun su viage, les paracia que era el. Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. iii. c. 18.

of the low and base-minded of the soldiery; probably in their rapacious eagerness for gain. They had produced a general ill will among the Indians toward their guests, and a change in the feelings of the young and high-minded princess; who, instead of evincing her usual kindness and hospitality, grew cold and indifferent in her conduct, and appeared to eye the Spaniards with great distrust. De Soto remarked this change, and received private intelligence, that the princess was about to take to flight, and leave him without guides for his march, or porters for the baggage of the army. As his route would lie through various tracts of country under her dominion, any hostility on her part or on that of her subjects, could not but prove extremely embarrassing. He determined, therefore, to adopt a precaution, more than once practised in the course of his expedition, and which the Spaniards had found efficacious in their Mexican and Peruvian conquests; which was to secure the person of the Sovereign, by way of insuring the peaceful conduct of the people. Accordingly, he placed a guard round the person of the female cacique, and signified to her, that she was to accompany him in his march; but while he thus detained her as a hostage, he took care that she should be attended with the respect and ceremony due to her rank. The policy of this measure was apparent in the cessation of all brawls between the Spaniards and the natives; and in the good treatment which the army experienced during its subsequent march through the territories of the princess.

NOTE.

In detailing the march of the Spaniards, in search of Cofachiqui, we have as usual availed ourselves both of the Spanish and Portuguese narrations, reconciling them as far as possible, and exerting our judgment where they vary from each other. Nothing is more perplexing than to make out the route in

conformity to modern landmarks. The discovery of the coats of mail and dagger, the relics of the unfortunate Ayllon and his comrades, throws an unexpected light upon one part of their route, and shows that the province of Cofachiqui was at no very great distance from the sea-coast of Georgia, or South Carolina; though it could not have been within two days' journey, as the Portuguese narrator intimates. The armor and weapons of Ayllon and his followers had probably been divided among the savages, and carried as trophies into the interior. The river which passed by Cofachiqui, and which the Spaniards supposed to be the St. Helena, has been variously conjectured to be the Ocone, the Ogeechee, and the Savannah. Colonel Pickett, in a note to the first chapter of his History of Alabama, says that all Indian tradition places the town of Cofachiqui on the east bank of the Savannah—at the modern Silver Bluff, Barnwell District, South Carolina. About 1735, a young Irishman—George Gilpin—settled upon the ruins of Cofachiqui, and gave it the name of Silver Bluff, owing to the tradition, that De Soto and his troops searched there for silver in the bed of the river, and among the various strata of the Bluff, some of which resembled silver ore. As to the stores of vast quantities of pearls found in the Temples, and said to abound in the villages, they pass our belief; yet both Spanish and Portuguese narrators are very positive and circumstantial in their account of them.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE SPANIARDS RESUME THEIR MARCH—THE PRINCESS OF COFACHIQUI CARRIED AWAY CAPTIVE—A MUTINY—THE ARMY TRAVERSE THE TERRITORY OF THE CHEROKEES—ESCAPE OF THE YOUNG PRINCESS—JUAN TERRON AND HIS PEARLS.

1540.

On the third of May, 1540, De Soto again set forward on his adventurous course, taking with him the beautiful Princess of Cofachiqui and her train.* His route now lay towards the north or northwest, in the direction of the province of Cosa, which was said to be at the distance of twelve days' journey. As the country through which they were to march was represented as bare of provisions, Gonzalo Silvestre and two other cavaliers were detached, with a large body of horse and foot, to visit a village, twelve leagues distant, where there was a great deposit of grain, with which they were to load themselves and rejoin the main army.

* The captivity of the princess is given on the authority of the Portuguese narrator; the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega makes no mention of it. The Portuguese narrator intimates that the princess was treated with neglect; but this is contrary to the general conduct of De Soto towards the caciques whom he detained as hostages.

Silvestre and his companions accomplished their errand, and having taken as much maize as they could carry, hastened to rejoin the army, but were five days before they came upon its traces. When they did so, they found that the army had continued on, and must be a considerable distance ahead. Here some difficulties occurred. The foot-soldiers were eager to press forward, but the troopers demurred. Three of their horses were lame and unable to travel fast, and it would not do to leave them behind, for they were considered the nerves and sinews of the army, not merely from their real services, but from the extreme awe and dread with which they inspired the savages.

A mutinous spirit evinced itself, for a time, among the foot-soldiers, who dreaded being separated from the main force, and set forward by themselves in a tumultuous manner. The captains, however, threw themselves before them, and with difficulty compelled them to continue with the troopers, who were obliged to observe a slow pace, proportioned to the condition of the maimed horses.

On the following day, as they were marching under the heat of a noontide sun, there suddenly rose a violent hurricane, with tremendous thunder and lightning, and hail of such size as to wound and bruise severely wherever it struck. The Spaniards sheltered themselves under their bucklers, or took refuge under some large trees which were at hand. Fortunately, the hurricane was as brief as it was violent; yet they were so severely battered and bruised by the hailstones, that they remained encamped for the remainder of that and the ensuing day.

They resumed their march on the morning of the third day, passing through various deserted hamlets, and, at length, crossed the frontiers of a province, called Xuala, where, to their great joy

they found the Adelantado and his troops encamped in a beautiful valley, and awaiting their arrival.

De Soto, in the course of his march, had passed through the province of Achalaque,* the most wretched country, says the Portuguese narrator, in all Florida. The inhabitants were a feeble, peaceful race, and nearly naked. They lived principally on herbs and roots, and wild-fowl which they killed with their bow and arrows. Their cacique brought the governor two deer skins, and seemed to think them a considerable present. Wild hens abounded in such quantities, that in one village the inhabitants brought the governor seven hundred.† Most of the inhabitants of this miserable province had fled to the woods on the approach of the Spaniards, leaving few in their villages, excepting the old, the blind, and the infirm.

The army remained several days in Xuala, to recruit the horses.‡ The principal village, bearing the same name as the province, was situated on the skirts of a mountain, with a small but rapid river flowing by it. Here the Spaniards found maize in abundance, as well as the different kinds of fruits and vegetables common to the country.

This place was under the domination of the youthful princess of Cofachiqui; and here, as every where else along the route, the Spaniards found the benefit of having her with them. She was

* Spelt Chalaque in the Portuguese narration. Supposed to be the barren country of the Cherokees. A. B. Meek, Esq., says this is the actual name now used by the Cherokee Indians to designate their country. See "Sketches of the History of Alabama," in the Southron, January, 1839.

† Evidently the species of Grouse commonly called the Prairie Hen.

‡ Xuala, or Choula, is supposed to have been on the site of the present town of Qualatche, at the source of the Catahootche river. Col. Pickett says it was probably in Habersham county.

Vide M'Culloch's Researches, Appendix, III.

always treated with great reverence by the inhabitants of the villages, who, at her command, furnished the army with provisions, and with porters to carry the baggage. And here, it is proper to observe, that De Soto endeavored, on all occasions, as far as his means permitted, to requite the kindness of the natives; making presents to such of the chieftains as treated him with amity, and especially leaving with each of them a couple of swine, male and female, from which to raise a future stock.

On leaving Xuala, a number of the inhabitants accompanied the Spaniards, laden with provisions. The first day's march was through a country covered with fields of maize of luxuriant growth. De Soto had inclined his route to the westward, in search of a province called Quexale, where the territories of the princess, or rather of her tributary caciques, ended. While they were on their march, the female cacique alighted from the litter on which she was borne, and eluding the Indian slaves who had charge of her, fled into the depths of a neighboring forest. Her escape is related by the Portuguese narrator, but no particular reason is given for it; probably, she dreaded being carried away captive beyond the bounds of her dominions. What seems to have caused some regret to the Spaniards, if we may believe the Portuguese historian, was, that she took with her a small box made of reeds, called by the Indians Petaca, which was full of beautiful unpierced pearls, of great value.* Two negro slaves and a Barbary Moor accompanied her in her flight, and, as was afterwards understood, were harbored and concealed by the natives, who rejoiced to have any thing remain among them, that had belonged to the white men.

During the next five days they traversed a chain of easy

* Portuguese Narration, c. 15.

mountains, covered with oak and mulberry trees, with intervening valleys, rich in pasturage, and irrigated by clear and rapid streams. These mountains were twenty leagues across, and quite uninhabited.* In the course of their weary march through this uninhabited tract, a foot-soldier, calling to a horseman, who was his friend, drew forth from his wallet a linen bag, in which were six pounds of pearls, probably filched from one of the Indian sepulchres. These he offered as a gift to his comrade, being heartily tired of carrying them on his back, though he had a pair of broad shoulders, capable of bearing the burden of a mule. The horseman refused to accept so thoughtless an offer. "Keep them yourself," said he, "you have most need of them. The governor intends shortly to send messengers to Havana; you can forward these presents and have them sold, and three or four horses and mares purchased for you with the proceeds, so that you need no longer go on foot."

Juan Terron was piqued at having his offer refused. "Well," said he, "if you will not have them, I swear I will not carry them, and they shall remain here." So saying, he untied the bag, and, whirling around as if he were sowing seed, scattered the pearls in all directions among the thickets and herbage. Then putting up the bag in his wallet, as if it was more valuable than the pearls,

* Probably the termination of the Apalachian or Allegany range, running through the northern part of Georgia. Martin, in his History of Louisiana, makes the Spaniards traverse the State of Tennessee, and even penetrate the State of Kentucky, as far north as the thirty-seventh degree of north latitude. This supposition is evidently erroneous, as both the Portuguese and Spanish chroniclers state, that, from the province of Xuala De Soto struck in a westerly direction, and we find him in a few days on the banks of the river Canasauga.

Belknap, Vol. i. p. 189, suggests that the Spaniards crossed the mountains within the thirty-fifth degree of latitude.

he marched on, leaving his comrade and the other by-standers astonished at his folly.

The soldiers made a hasty search for the scattered pearls, and recovered thirty of them. When they beheld their great size and beauty, none of them being bored and discolored, they lamented that so many of them had been lost; for the whole would have sold in Spain for more than six thousand ducats. This egregious folly gave rise to a common proverb in the army, that "there are no pearls for Juan Terron." The poor fellow himself became an object of constant jest and ridicule, until at last, made sensible of his absurd conduct, he implored them never to banter him further on the subject.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. iii. c. xx.

CHAPTER L.

ARRIVAL OF THE ARMY AT GUAXULE—RECEPTION OF THE SPANIARDS BY THE CACIQUE OF ICHIAHA—TWO TROOPERS DISPATCHED TO THE MOUNTAINS IN SEARCH OF GOLD, AND WHAT SUCCESS THEY HAD.

1540.

Having made their way over this mountainous waste, the army reached the province of Guaxule. When within half a league of the principal town, they discovered the cacique approaching, followed by a train of five hundred warriors, arrayed in rich mantles of various skins, and adorned with gayly-colored feathers. In this state he advanced to the governor, received him with great courtesy, and escorted him to his village, which consisted of three hundred houses. It stood in a pleasant spot, bordered by small streams that took their rise in the adjacent mountains. The governor was quartered in the house of the cacique, which stood on a mound, and was surrounded by a terrace, wide enough for six men to go abreast.

Here De Soto halted four days to obtain information respecting the neighboring country; during which time the cacique made him a present of three hundred dogs, the flesh of which the Spaniards used as food; though they were not eaten by the natives.*

* Portuguese Relation, c. 15. Biedma, in H. Terneaux-Compans, p. 69.

The many streams that traverse this province soon mingled their waters, and formed a grand and powerful river, along which the army resumed their journey.*

On the second day of their march, they entered the small town of Canasauga,† where they were met by twenty Indians, bearing baskets of mulberries, a fruit which abounded in this region, as did likewise the nut and plum trees. Continuing forward for five days, through a desert country, on the 25th of June they came in sight of Ichiaha,‡ thirty leagues from Guaxule.

This village stood on one end of an island, more than five leagues in length. The cacique came out to receive the governor, and gave him a friendly welcome: his warriors treated the soldiers in the same kind and frank manner. They crossed the river in many canoes, and on rafts prepared for the purpose, and were quartered by the Indians in their houses. Most of the soldiers, however, encamped under the trees around the village, and their worn-out horses enjoyed rich and abundant pasturage in the neighboring meadows. The Spaniards found in this village a

* Mr. M'Culloch suggests that this river was the Etowee, which falls into the Coosa.

† This Indian village has probably given the name to the Connesaugo, one of the small tributaries of the river Coosa.—Vide Mr. M'Culloch's Researches, p. 525.

‡ This is spelt Chiaha in the Portuguese Narration. Colonel Pickett says it is the site of the modern town of Rome, and that De Soto had now reached the confluence of the Oostanaula and Etowah, which make the Coosa, and that the Spaniards mistook the peninsula on which the village stood for an island. A. B. Meeks also states, that there is no such island now in the Coosa, and thinks it probable that the Spaniards either mistook the peninsula formed by the junction of the two rivers for an island, or that these two rivers were originally united, so as to form an island near their present confluence. He adds, that he has heard this latter supposition asserted by two persons well acquainted with the country.

quantity of bears' grease preserved in pots, and likewise oil made from the walnut, and a pot of honey. The latter they had not seen before, nor did they ever again meet with it during their wanderings.

While in the town of Ichiaha, the governor, as usual, was diligent in his inquiries after the precious metals. In reply, the cacique informed him, that about thirty miles to the northward there was a province called Chisca, where there were mines of copper, and also of another metal of the same color, but finer and brighter. It was not used by the natives as much as copper, because it was softer, but they sometimes melted them together. This intelligence aroused the attention of De Soto. It agreed with what he had been told at Cofachiqui, where he had met with small axes of copper, mingled with gold. He determined to set off in search of the mines, but the cacique informed him that to reach them he would have to traverse an uninhabited wilderness, and mountains impassable for horses. He advised him, therefore, to send persons to visit the province of Chisca, and offered to furnish them with guides.

De Soto adopted his advice. Juan de Villalobos and Francisco de Silvera, two fearless soldiers, forthwith volunteered for the enterprise, and accordingly set off on foot, leaving their horses behind, as they would only delay and embarrass them in the rough country they would have to traverse.

After an absence of ten days, they returned to the camp, and made their report. Their route had lain part of the way through excellent land for grain and pasturage, where they had been well received and feasted by the natives. They had found among them a buffalo hide, an inch in thickness, with hair as soft as the wool of a sheep, which, as usual, they mistook for the hide of a

beef. In the course of their journey they had crossed mountains so rugged and precipitous that it would be impossible for the army to traverse them. As to the yellow metal of which they had heard, it proved to be nothing but a fine kind of copper or brass, such as they had already met with; but from the appearance of the soil, they thought it probable both gold and silver might exist in the neighborhood.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. iii. c. 20. Portuguese Relation, c. 16. The mountains here mentioned are supposed to be the Lookout Mountains, part of the Appalachian chain, running through the northern part of Alabama. The existence of gold in various parts of the Southern States, ascertained of late years, proves that many of these Indian reports were founded in truth.

CHAPTER LI.

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE INDIANS EXTRACTED THE PEARLS FROM THE SHELL—GENEROSITY OF A SOLDIER—WHAT BEFELL LUIS BRAVO DE XERES WHILE FISHING.

1540.

During the time that De Soto had remained at the village awaiting the return of the two soldiers from the mines, several circumstances had occurred. The cacique came one day to the governor, bringing him a present of a string of pearls, two arms in length. The pearls were as large as filberts, and, had they not been bored by means of fire, would have been of immense value. De Soto thankfully received them, and in return presented the Indian with pieces of velvet and cloth of various colors, and other Spanish trifles, held in much esteem by the natives. In reply to the demand of the governor, the cacique said that the pearls were obtained in the neighborhood; that in the sepulchre of his ancestors were amassed a prodigious quantity, and that they were welcome to carry away as much as they pleased. The Adelantado thanked him for his good will, but replied that much as he wished for pearls, he never would insult the sanctuary of their ancestral tombs to obtain them; and added, that he only accepted the string of pearls as a present from his hands.

As De Soto expressed a curiosity to see the manner of extracting the pearls from the shells, the cacique instantly dispatched forty canoes to fish for oysters during the night. At an early hour next morning, a quantity of wood was gathered and piled up on the banks of the river, and being set on fire, was speedily reduced to glowing coals. As soon as the canoes arrived, the coals were spread out and the oysters laid upon them. They soon opened with the heat, and from some of the first thus opened the Indians obtained ten or twelve pearls as large as peas, which they brought to the governor and cacique, who were standing together looking on. The pearls were of a fine quality, but somewhat discolored by the fire and smoke. The Indians were prone also to injure their pearls, by boring them with a heated copper instrument.

De Soto having gratified his curosity, returned to his quarters to partake of the morning meal. While eating, a soldier entered with a large pearl in his hand. He had stewed some oysters, and in eating them felt this pearl between his teeth. Not having been injured by fire or smoke, it retained its beautiful whiteness, and was so large and perfect in its form that several Spaniards, who pretended to be skilled in these matters, declared it would be worth four hundred ducats in Spain. The soldier would have given it to the governor to present to his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, but De Soto declined the generous offer, advising the soldier to preserve it until he got to Havana, where he might purchase horses and many other things with it; moreover, in reward of his liberal disposition, De Soto insisted upon paying the fifth of the value, due to the crown.*

* Col. Pickett says, "The oyster mentioned was the muscle to be found in all the rivers of Alabama. Heaps of muscle shells are now to be seen on

About this time, a cavalier, one Luis Bravo de Xeres, strolling, with lance in hand, along a plain bordering on the river, saw a small animal at a short distance, and launched his weapon at it. The lance missed the mark, but, slipping along the grass, shot over the river bank. Luis Bravo ran to recover his lance, but to his horror found it had killed a Spaniard, who had been fishing with a reed on the margin of the river, at the foot of the bank. The steeled point of the lance had entered one temple and came out at the other, and the poor Spaniard had dropped dead on the spot. His name was Juan Mateos; he was the only one in the expedition that had gray hairs, from which circumstance he was universally called father Mateos, and respected as such. His unfortunate death was lamented by the whole army.

our river banks wherever Indians used to live. They were much used by the ancient Indians for some purpose, and old warriors have informed me that their ancestors once used the shells to temper the clay with which they made their vessels. But as thousands of the shells lie banked up, some deep in the ground, we may also suppose that the Indians, in De Soto's time, everywhere in Alabama, obtained pearls from them. There can be no doubt about the quantity of pearls found in this State and Georgia, in 1540, but they were of a coarser and less valuable kind than the Spaniards supposed. The Indians used to perforate them with a heated copper spindle, and string them round their necks and arms like beads. Others made toy babies and birds of them."—See "History of Alabama," by A. J. Pickett.

CHAPTER LII.

HOW THEY WERE TREATED BY THE CACIQUE OF ACOSTE, AT WHOSE VILLAGE THEY ARRIVED—THE MANNER IN WHICH THE YOUNG CACIQUE COSA CAME FORTH TO MEET THEM—THE INDIANS SHOW A HOSTILE DISPOSITION—THE CACIQUE COSA ESCORTS THEM TO TALISE, AND WHY.

1540.

On the ensuing day, after the return of the soldiers from the mines of Chisca, the governor departed from the village of Ichiaha, leaving the natives well contented with the presents they had received in return for their hospitality.

This day he marched the length of the Island, and at sunset, on the 2d of July, came in sight of the village of Acoste, built on the extreme point.* The army encamped about a cross-bow shot from the town, while De Soto proceeded, accompanied by a guard of eight troopers, to visit the cacique. This chieftain was a fierce warrior, and placed himself in battle array, at the head of

* The Portuguese narrator says, this town was seven days' journey from Ichiaha. The Inca is probably the most correct, as he states the length of the island, as he calls it, to be about five leagues, which would not be more than a day's march. "The Spaniards were now," says Col. Pickett, "in Alabama, in the territory embraced in the county of Cherokee, and by the side of the Coosa, one of our noblest streams."

fifteen hundred of his braves, who were decorated with their war plumes, and equipped with arms. He received the governor with great courtesy, and appeared very kindly disposed; but while they were conversing together, some of the foot-soldiers had arrived, and began rifling and pillaging the houses. The Indians, exasperated at this outrage, seized some war-clubs that were at hand, and assailed them. De Soto saw at a glance the peril of his situation, surrounded as he was by enemies. With his wonted presence of mind, he seized a cudgel and began beating his own men, at the same time that he secretly dispatched a trooper to order the horse to arm and come to his rescue. This attack upon his own followers, as if he was indignant at their conduct, reassured the Indians. De Soto then prevailed upon the cacique to visit the encampment with his chief warriors, and no sooner had the Indians left the village with this intent, than the troopers surrounded them and carried them off prisoners.* Notwithstanding their captivity, they maintained an arrogant air, answering every question insolently, shaking their fists, and insulting the Spaniards with taunts and menaces, until they lost all patience, and were only restrained from coming to blows by the earnest commands and entreaties of the Adelantado. This night they posted sentries, and kept as vigilant a watch as though they were in an enemy's country.

On the following day, the Indians were more peaceable and friendly, and the cacique furnished the governor with maize for his journey, and offered him any thing else in his dominions. A message received from Ichiaha was the cause of this civility. De Soto thanked him for his offer, liberated him and his warriors, and in return for the maize, made him presents that greatly

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 16.

pleased him. The same morning they left the village, and crossed the river on rafts and in canoes, rejoiced at having extricated themselves from this village without any bloodshed.

They now traversed more than a hundred leagues of a fertile and populous province, called Cosa,* journeying at the rate of four leagues a day; sometimes lodging in the hamlets, sometimes camping in the fields. Throughout the whole distance they were treated with the utmost kindness by the inhabitants, who quartered them in their houses, supplied their wants, and escorted them from one village to another. In this way they travelled for twenty-four days, until they came in sight of the village of Cosa, from which the province took its name. This was the residence of the cacique, from whom they had received repeated and friendly messages in the course of their journey. He came forth to meet them in a kind of litter, borne upon the shoulders of four of his chief warriors. From his shoulders hung a mantle of martin skins, fashioned much after the manner of the mantles worn by Spanish females, and on his head was a diadem of feathers. Several Indians walked beside his rude chariot, singing and playing upon instruments.†

He was a young man about twenty-six years of age, of fine person and noble countenance, and was attended by a train of a thousand warriors, tall and well formed, as were generally the people of this country. They were in their finest array, with lofty plumes of rich and varied colors, and mantles of various fine skins, many of them of martins, scenting of musk. They were

* This embraced the present counties of Benton, Talladega, Coosa, and Tallapoosa.—See "Sketches of the History of Alabama," by A. B. Meek, Esq.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 16.

marshalled in squadrons, and, with their gay plumes waving in the breeze, made a brilliant appearance.

The village was situated on the banks of a river,* amidst green and beautiful meadows, irrigated by numerous small streams. The country around was populous and fruitful; the houses were well stored with maize and a small kind of bean; and fields of Indian corn extended from village to village. There were plums of various kinds; some like those of Spain, others peculiar to the country. Grape vines clambered to the tops of the trees which overhung the river. There were others in the fields, with low stocks and very large sweet grapes.†

The village contained five hundred dwellings, and as they were very spacious the captains and soldiers were all accommodated. The governor was quartered in the residence of the cacique.

De Soto often took the precaution in populous villages, where there was any danger to be apprehended from the inhabitants, to surround the cacique with guards, which kept him in a kind of honorable durance, and prevented his escaping to any fastness. In this way he served as a hostage to insure the peaceful conduct of his subjects. It was also a part of the governor's policy, as has been already shown, to carry the cacique along with him, as he marched through his dominions; by which means he secured a supply of guides from the villages, and of Indians to attend

* Supposed to be the river Coosa, which takes its rise in the Appalachian mountains and empties into the Alabama. From the site and description of the village, Mr. M'Culloch presumes it to be the same called in the maps "Old Coosa," situated on the river of the same name, in north latitude about 33° 30'.—See M'Culloch's Researches, p. 525.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 16. This is supposed to have been the same native grape, called the Isabella, which has since been cultivated.—Vide Bancroft, Hist. U. S. c. 2, p. 54.

upon the army and carry the baggage. In their marching, the cacique was always treated with great respect and ceremony, and had fine raiment given him; and, if so inclined, a horse furnished him on which to ride. On arriving at the territories of another cacique, the preceding one and his subjects were dismissed at the frontier.

The Indians of Cosa were indignant at the restraint put upon their cacique; and manifested a hostile disposition towards the Spaniards. Several of them were taken prisoners and put in chains, but after a little time, the most of them, at the intercession of the cacique, were set at liberty.* After this a good understanding prevailed, and the Spaniards were hospitably entertained during twelve days that they remained in the village.

The cacique would fain have persuaded the governor to make this place his residence and seat of government, or at least to winter there; but De Soto was anxious to arrive at the bay of Achusi, where he had appointed Captain Diego Maldonado to meet him in the autumn. Since leaving the province of Xuala, therefore, he had merely made a bend through the country, and was now striking southwardly for the sea-coast.

During their sojourn in this village, a soldier of low and dissolute character deserted, and concealed himself among the natives, so that he could not be found. A negro, also, who was too infirm to travel, was left in charge of the cacique.†

* Portuguese Relation, c. 16.

† Colonel Pickett says, "The negro left at Cosa was not the only memorial of De Soto that remained with these people. George Stiggins, whose mother was a Natchez Indian, and whose father was a Scotchman, was born in the Talladega country. He was a fair English scholar, and a pretty good writer. He had been for years engaged in writing a history of the Creeks, and died some years ago, leaving it in an unfinished state. His son permitted

On the 20th of August, the governor departed from Cosa, taking with him, as usual, the cacique and many of his warriors with a train of his subjects, bearing provisions. At one of the villages, named Ullabali, a number of Indian braves came forth, painted and plumed, with bows and arrows in their hands. They welcomed the Spaniards in the name of their cacique, and escorted the governor into the town, where he found all their men in arms, and judged by their hostile looks that they meditated some outbreak. In fact, he was afterwards informed that they had intended to attempt the rescue of the cacique Cosa, had he seemed to approve their design; but the cacique gave them no encouragement.* The army continued forward to the frontier town of Talise.†

This was an important Indian post, fortified with ramparts of earth and strong palisades, and situated on the bank of a very rapid river, which nearly surrounded it. Though subject to the cacique of Cosa, it was represented as being disaffected to his rule, and inclined to revolt in favor of a powerful chieftain of the neighborhood named Tascaluza.‡ It was supposed, therefore,

me to peruse it one day. Stiggins asserts, that the Talladegas had, at a late day, a brass kettle-drum and several shields, which once belonged to the army of De Soto, and that he had often seen them. The Cosas used them as trophies in their annual festivals. Besides these, De Soto left hogs and sometimes cattle among the Alabama towns, and such is the origin of these animals among the Indians. Horses and mules were too valuable to be given away.

* Portuguese Relation, c. 17.

† Supposed to be the same with Tallassee, lying at the elbow of Talapoosa river. The same name has always been applied to the spot by the Indians. M'Culloch, p. 525. Spelt in the Portuguese Narration, Tallise.

‡ Mr. Meek says, this name is a pure Choctaw compound word, from *Tusca*, warrior, and *Lusa*, *Loosa*, black. And he thinks that this and several other words proves that the Indians mentioned in the text were of the same tribe as the present Choctaws.

that the cacique of Cosa had gladly accompanied the Spaniards to this frontier town, in hopes of overawing his refractory subjects, and even his formidable neighbor, by appearing in company with such redoubtable allies.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE GIGANTIC CHIEFTAIN TUSCALUZA—HIS HAUGHTY RECEPTION OF THE SPANIARDS — GREAT SUFFERINGS OF THE ARMY FOR THE WANT OF SALT—STRANGE MALADY OCCASIONED THEREBY.

1540.

Tuscaluza, the cacique on whose frontiers the Spaniards had now arrived, appears to have been one of the most potent, proud, and warlike of the native chieftains of the south. His territories must have comprised a great part of what are now the States of Alabama and Mississippi, and he is one of the few of the native heroes who have left local memorials behind them. The river Tuscaloosa,* which waters his native valley, bears his name, and it has likewise been given to the capital of the State.

This chieftain had heard, with solicitude, of the approach of the Spaniards to his territories, and probably feared some hostility on their part, in combination with his rival, the cacique of Cosa. He sent, therefore, his son, a youth of eighteen years of age, attended by a train of warriors, on an embassy to De Soto, proffering him his friendship and services, and inviting him to his residence, which was about thirteen leagues from Talise. The

* Likewise called the Black Warrior River.

young ambassador was of a noble stature, taller than any Spaniard or Indian in the army, and acquitted himself in his mission with great grace and courtesy. The governor was struck with his appearance and manners, and received and entertained him in a distinguished manner; dismissing him with presents for himself and his father, and assurances that he accepted the friendship of the latter and would visit him shortly. He accordingly crossed the river with his army, in canoes and on rafts, it being too deep at Talise to be forded, and then set forward on his march, taking with him a number of the subjects of the cacique of Cosa. As to the cacique himself, being on the frontiers of his province, he took a friendly leave of the Spaniards.

On the second night they encamped in a wood, about two leagues from the village in which the cacique of Tuscaluza was quartered, which, however, was not the capital of his province. From hence De Soto set off at an early hour of the morning for the village, preceded by his camp-master-general and several of the cavaliers.

The cacique had already received notice from his scouts, that the Spaniards were at hand, and had made some preparations to receive them in state. They found him posted on the crest of a hill, which commanded a wide view over a rich and beautiful valley. He was seated on a kind of stool, made of wood, somewhat concave, but without back or arms; such was the simple throne used by the caciques of the country. Around him stood a hundred of his principal men, dressed in rich mantles and plumes. Beside him was his standard-bearer, who bore on the end of a lance a dressed deer-skin, stretched out to the size of a buckler. It was of a yellow color, traversed by three blue stripes. This

was the great banner of this warrior chieftain, and the only military standard that the Spaniards met with throughout the whole of their expedition.

Tuscaluza, or Tuscaloosa (to adopt the modern mode of writing the name), appeared to be about forty years of age; and his person corresponded to the formidable reputation which he bore throughout the country. Like his son, he was gigantic in his proportions, being a foot and a half taller than any of his attendants. His countenance was handsome though severe, showing the loftiness and ferocity of his spirit. He was broad across the shoulders, small at the waist, and so admirably formed, that the Spaniards declared him altogether the finest looking Indian they had yet beheld.

The haughty chieftain took not the least notice of the cavaliers and officers of the camp, who preceded De Soto; although they arranged themselves in his presence. The troopers sought in vain to excite his attention, by making their horses curvet and caracole as they passed, and sometimes spurring them up to his very feet. He still maintained the most imperturbable gravity, or cast his eyes now and then upon them in a haughty and disdainful manner.

When De Soto, however, approached, the cacique arose and advanced fifteen or twenty paces to receive him. The governor alighted and embraced him, and they remained in the same place conversing, while the troops proceeded to take up the quarters allotted them, in and about the village. After this, the cacique and the governor proceeded, hand in hand, to the quarters prepared for the latter, which was in a house near to that of Tuscaloosa. Here the cacique left him, and retired with his Indians;

but De Soto, who knew his haughty and warlike character, took care to have a vigilant watch kept upon his movements.*

A strange malady about this time broke out among the Spaniards, which was attributed to the want of salt: with some the consequences were fatal. After a little while they were seized with a low fever, and the surface of the body became discolored and of a greenish hue, from the breast downward. At the end of three or four days, their bodies emitted a fetid odor, that might be perceived at several paces distance, and they perished of a general mortification of the intestines. A few cases of the kind spread horror through the camp; for no one knew how to treat the disorder. In this dilemma some adopted a remedy or preventive, recommended by the Indians; a lye made from the ashes of a certain herb, and used with their food, instead of salt. Those who made use of this condiment escaped the fatal mortification of the bowels; others, who spurned at it as nauseous, or as the quackery of ignorant savages, fell victims to their prejudices. Some adopted it, but too late, for when the fever and its accompanying mortification had once seized upon the patient, the lye was no longer effectual. So much did the Spaniards suffer for the want of salt during their long marchings in the interior, that one of the historians of the expedition attributes to this cause alone the death of more than sixty in the course of a year.†

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. iii. c. 24. Portuguese Relation, c. 17. Biedma in H. Ternaux-Compans, p. 71. This interesting scene, says Colonel Pickett, occurred below Line Creek, in the present county of Montgomery.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, L. iv. c. 3.

CHAPTER LIV.

TUSCALOOSA, HIS STEED AND RAIMENT—HIS VILLAGE—MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF TWO SOLDIERS—ARRIVAL AT THE VILLAGE OF MAUVILA.

1540.

After reposing two days in the village, the governor continued his march, accompanied by Tuscaloosa, whom he kept with him for his own security. De Soto ordered, as usual, that a horse should be provided for the cacique; but for some time they sought in vain for a steed of sufficient size and strength to bear so gigantic a rider. At length they found a stout hackney, belonging to the governor, which, from its powerful frame, was used as a packhorse; yet when the cacique bestrode him his feet nearly touched the ground. The governor had given Tuscaloosa a dress of scarlet cloth, and a flowing mantle of the same, which, with his towering plumes, added to the grandeur of his appearance, and made him conspicuous among the steel-clad warriors around him.

At the end of three days' march, of four leagues each, they arrived at the principal village, called Tuscaloosa,* from which the province and the cacique derived their name. It was a strong place, situated like Talise, upon a peninsula formed by the wind-

* This town is called Piache by the Portuguese narrator, and Tazalaza by Biedma.

ings of the same river, which had here grown wider and more powerful.*

During the next day they were busily employed in passing the river on light rafts made of reeds and dry wood, the inhabitants not having any canoes. As the river was gentle, the troops crossed it without difficulty, but the day being exhausted, they encamped for the night in a beautiful valley about a league beyond.

On the following morning two soldiers were missing. One of them, named Juan de Villalobos, was much given to wander away by himself to explore the country, and it was supposed that they had strayed away together, and been either lost in the woods or cut off by the natives. De Soto inquired after them of the Indians who accompanied Tuscaloosa: they were abrupt and insolent in their replies. "Why do you ask us about your people?" said they; "Are we responsible for them? Did you place them under our charge?"

The suspicions of De Soto were the more awakened by these replies. He had high words with the cacique on the subject, and threatened to detain him hostage until the Spaniards should be produced. Seeing this menace was of no avail, he concluded that the soldiers had been massacred; and dissembled his indignation for the present, lest he might create difficulties and delay his progress. He continued forward, therefore, and in company with Tuscaloosa, apparently on amiable terms, but they were secretly distrustful of each other, and the cacique felt that he was a kind

* This was the Alabama River, and it is believed that Tuscaloosa was situated near Evans's Landing, in Wilcox county. There is a ford on the Alabama, about sixty leagues above its confluence with the Tombecbe, which the Choctaws called Taskaloussas. Here the army may have crossed. Vide McCulloch, p. 525; Bossus's Travels in Louisiana, p. 282; A. J Pickett, p. 21; A. B. Meek, p. 22.

of prisoner. In the course of their march, Tuscaloosa dispatched one of his people ahead, to a town called Mauvila,* under pretext of ordering a supply of provisions and Indian attendants for the army. The third day their route had been through a very populous country, and they were drawing near to Mauvila. At a very early hour the next morning, De Soto called to him two picked and confidential men, named Gonzalo Quadrado Xaramillo, and Diego Vazques, and sent them in the advance, to enter the village, observe what was going on there, and await his arrival.

He then mustered a hundred horse and a hundred foot as a vanguard, and set off with them for the village, ordering Luis de Moscoso, the camp-master-general, to follow speedily with the residue of the forces. The cacique Tuscaloosa accompanied the governor; being evidently retained about him as a kind of hostage.

About eight o'clock in the morning of October the 18th, they arrived before the village of Mauvila † This was the stronghold of the cacique, where he and his principal men resided; and, being on the frontiers of his territories, it was strongly fortified.

* Maville, in the Portuguese account.

† This town is supposed to have stood on the north side of the Alabama, and at a place now called Choctaw Bluff, in the county of Clarke, about twenty-five miles above the junction of that river with the Tombecbe, within a hundred miles from Pensacola; and this opinion is strengthened by the fact, that aged Indians in the neighborhood, at the present day, point it out as the site of the great battle between De Soto and the Mobilians. There is little doubt that it gave the name to the present river and bay of Mobile. The letters *v* and *b* are often used indifferently in Spanish, in place of each other, and articulated in nearly the same manner. Charlevoix, in his Journal Historique, Let. xxxiii. p. 452, says, "Garcilaso de la Vega, dans son Histoire de la Floride, parle d'une Bourgade appellée *Mauvila*, la quelle a sans doute donné son nom à la Rivière, et à la nation, qui était établié sur ses bords. Ces Mauviliens étaient alors tres-puissans; à peine en reste-t'il adjourd'hui quelques vestiges." In the account of these marchings, and of the affairs at

It stood in a fine plain, and was surrounded by a high wall formed of huge trunks of trees driven into the ground, side by side, and wedged together. These were crossed within and without by others smaller and longer, bound to them by bands made of split reeds and wild vines. The whole was thickly plastered over with a kind of mortar, made of clay and straw trampled together, which filled up every chink and crevice of the wood-work, so that it appeared as if smoothed with a trowel. Throughout its whole circuit, the wall was pierced, at the height of a man, with loop-holes, whence arrows might be discharged at an enemy, and at every fifty paces it was surmounted by a tower, capable of holding seven or eight fighting men. Numbers of the trees which had been driven into the ground had taken root, and flourished, springing up loftily out of the rampart, and spreading their branches above it, so as to form a circle of foliage around the village. There were but two gates to the place, one to the east, the other to the west. In the centre of the village was a large square, around which were erected the principal dwellings. The whole number of houses in the place did not exceed eighty, but they were of great size, capable of lodging from five to fifteen hundred persons each. They were built after the Indian fashion, not cut up into different rooms, but consisting simply of one great hall, like a church; and as they belonged either to the cacique or his principal subjects, they were constructed with more than usual skill.*

Mauvila, I have collated the narrative of the Inca, Biedma, and the Portuguese author, and have availed myself of the three accounts, where they were not totally irreconcilable. The Inca, as usual, is much the most minute, graphic, and characteristic, and supports his main authority, in various places, by extracts from the journals of the two soldiers. A. B. Meek, p. 23; Col. Pickett, p. 22.

* The description of Mauvila is entirely from the Inca. Garcilaso de la Vega, L. iii. c. 20.

CHAPTER LV.

THE DISASTROUS BATTLE OF MAUVILA.

1540.

When the governor and the vanguard appeared before the town, a splendid train of warriors came forth to receive them, painted and decorated, and clad in robes of skins and flaunting feathers of every brilliant color. These came singing and dancing, and playing on rude instruments of music. To these succeeded a band of young damsels, beautiful in form and feature, as were generally the natives of this part of the country.

In this way the governor entered the village, side by side with the cacique in his flaming mantle of scarlet, followed by a train of horsemen in glittering armor, and proceeded by dancing groups of Indians. Having arrived in the square, they alighted, and the governor ordered that the horses should be taken outside of the village and tethered until their quarters were prepared for them. The cacique then called to Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, and pointed out one of the largest houses as the quarters for the governor and his principal officers, and an adjacent one for his servants and attendants; as to the rest of the troops, they were to be lodged in cabins of bark and branches, prepared for their reception, about a bow-shot without the walls. The governor was

not well pleased with an arrangement which would separate him from his troops, but replied that it should be attended to when the camp-master arrived. The cacique then signified a wish to be left to himself, and to remain at that village, but was given to understand that he must still continue with De Soto. The haughty spirit of Tuscaloosa rose within him, at being thus kept in thraldom. He told the governor that he might depart in peace, whenever he pleased; but that he must not pretend to carry him out of his country and dominions. So saying, he entered a house, where some of his subjects were assembled, armed with bows and arrows. The moment he was gone, Gonzalo Quadrado Xaramillo, one of the cavaliers who had been sent ahead to observe the movements of the Indians, approached the governor, and reported that various circumstances had led him to suspect some dark and treacherous plot. He stated, that in the few houses in sight, there were more than ten thousand chosen warriors assembled; not one of them old, or of the servile class, but all fighting men, noble and young, and well armed; and that many of the houses were filled with weapons. Not a child was to be found in the place; and though there were many females, they were all young girls. The inhabitants, too, had been diligently employed in strengthening the palisades around the town, and in clearing the fields, for the distance of a musket-shot round the village, so that the very roots and herbage had been pulled up by the hand; as if all had been prepared for a fighting-ground.

The governor pondered for a moment, then directed word to be passed secretly from one to the other, among the troopers, to hold themselves ready for action; he also charged Xaramillo to communicate all that he had observed to the master of the camp, the moment he should arrive, that he might make his arrange-

ments accordingly. In the mean time, he determined to wear a friendly aspect, and endeavor to conciliate the cacique by courteous treatment.

Word was now brought him, that his servants had prepared the morning's meal in one of the houses which looked upon the square. The governor immediately sent Juan Ortiz to invite the cacique to the repast, as they were accustomed to eat together.

Juan Ortiz presented himself at the door of the large house into which the cacique had entered, but several Indians met him at the threshold, and refused him admittance. The message he brought was passed in to the cacique, and word returned that he would come to the governor immediately.

Some time having elapsed without his appearance, Juan Ortiz presented himself with a second message, and received a similar reply. After another interval he returned a third time, and called out, "Tell Tuscaloosa to come forth; the food is upon the table, and the governor is waiting for him."

Upon this there sallied forth an Indian, who appeared to be the general. He was in a furious heat, and his eyes flashed fire. "Who are these robbers! these vagabonds!" cried he, "who keep calling to my chief, Tuscaloosa, come out! come out! with as little reverence as if he were one of them? By the sun and moon! this insolence is no longer to be borne. Let us cut them to pieces on the spot, and put an end to their wickedness and tyranny."

Scarce had he spoken these words, when another Indian stepped up behind him, and placed in his hand a bow and arrows The Indian general threw back from his shoulders the folds of a superb mantle of martin skins, which was buttoned round his neck, and baring his arm, drew to the head an arrow, levelled at a knot of Spaniards in the square. Before he had time to wing the

shaft, a blow from the sword of Baltasar de Gallegos laid open the whole of the side exposed by throwing back his mantle; his entrails gushed forth, and he fell dead on the spot.*

His son, a youth of eighteen years of age, of a noble demeanor, sprang to avenge his death, and let fly six or seven arrows as fast as he could draw them; but, seeing that they struck harmless upon the armor of Gallegos, he took his bow in both hands, and, closing with him, dealt him three or four blows over the head, with such rapidity and force, that the blood sprang from beneath his casque, and ran over his forehead. Gallegos, as soon as he could recover from the surprise, gave him two thrusts in the breast with his sword, that laid him dead at his feet.

The war-whoop now rang throughout the village. Torrents of warriors, ready armed, poured out of every house, attacking the Spaniards who were scattered about the principal street. Though overwhelmed with numbers, the Spaniards kept a bold face to the enemy, fighting stoutly, and disputing the ground inch by inch, until they retreated out of the city, leaving five of their number slain.

Numbers of the cavalry, who had tethered their horses in the purlieus of the village, and returned into the street, seeing the furious onset of the savages, ran out of the gate to the places where their steeds were tied. Those who made most speed were enabled to mount on horseback. Others, who lingered, had only time to cut the reins or halters of their horses and drive them off; while others, still more pressed, were obliged to leave their horses tied, and abandon them to their fate; having the grief to see them shot down by innumerable arrows, amidst the exulting yells of the savages.

* Portuguese Narrative, c 13.

The enemy, being in great force, divided into two bands; one to fight with the retreating Spaniards, the other to kill the horses, and gather the baggage and effects of the army, which had by this time arrived, and lay heaped along the wall and about the fields. Every thing thus fell into the hands of the enemy, excepting the baggage of Captain Andres de Vasconcellos, which had not yet arrived. The spoils were conveyed by the Indians into the village with great triumph, and put into their houses; they knocked off the chains of the slaves, who carried the baggage, and gave them weapons to fight with. The gates were shut, and, amidst the beating of wooden drums and the wildest yells, they displayed the effects of the Spaniards from the walls.*

In the mean time the few cavaliers who had been able to mount their horses, together with a few other horsemen who had just arrived from the main body, joined their forces and endeavored to protect their comrades who were fighting on foot. The approach of the cavalry checked the impetuosity of the savages, and gave time for the Spaniards to rally and form themselves into two bands, one of horse the other of foot. They then charged the enemy with a fury, inspired by their recent maltreatment, and drove them back to the village. They would have followed them in, but were assailed with such showers of stones and arrows, from the wall and the loopholes, that they were compelled to draw back.

The Indians, seeing them retreat, again rushed forth, some by the gate, others letting themselves down by the wall; and, closing with the Spaniards, seized hold of the very lances of the horsemen, struggling with them until drawn more than two hundred paces from the wall.

* Biedma in loco.

In this way they fought, backwards and forwards, without cessation, for three hours; the Spaniards always standing by each other, and keeping their front to the enemy, in which alone consisted their safety, being so few in number. They found, however, that they suffered too severely when near the village, from the missiles launched from the wall, and that their best chance was in the open fields, where they had room to manage their horses and wield their lances.

Throughout all these attacks and defences, the bold Captain Baltazar de Gallegos, the same who had struck the first blow in the battle, was ever in the front rank, and the fiercest of the fight. His perilous deeds were anxiously watched from afar, by his brother, Fray Juan de Gallegos, a worthy Dominican friar. Mounted on horseback, in his friar's dress, with a broad clerical hat on his head, he hovered about the skirts of the battle, spurring after the squadron in its attacks, and wheeling round and galloping off like mad in its retreats. The worthy friar was not a fighting man; his only object was to call his brother out of the affray, and mount him on the horse which he bestrode, that he might fight with more effect and less danger.

The bold Baltazar, however, heeded not his calls; he felt that his honor would not permit him to leave his post, so he kept on fighting on foot. At length, the peculiar dress of the friar, and his loud and repeated calls to his brother, attracted the notice of the enemy, who probably supposed him some chieftain encouraging his soldiers to fight hardily. Accordingly, in one of the retreats, as the friar's broad back was turned upon the foe, and he was galloping off at full speed, an Indian warrior sped a shaft with so true an aim, that, though at a distance, it struck him between the shoulders. Fortunately, he was protected by the two hoods of

his friar's dress, which lay in thick folds upon his back; his broad hat also, which was secured by a cord under his chin, had fallen back in his flight, and hung like a shield upon his shoulders; the arrow, therefore, met with so much resistance as to make but a slight wound. It dampened, however, the paternal zeal of the friar, who from that time kept himself at a wary distance from the battle.

A harder fate befell the brave Don Carlos Enriquez; a youthful cavalier who had married a niece of the Adelantado, and was beloved by the whole army, for his urbanity and his virtues. From the commencement of the battle he had fought valiantly, and was conspicuous in every assault. In the last charge, his horse was wounded in the breast by an arrow, which remained buried in the flesh. As soon as the squadron had retreated, Don Carlos endeavored to draw forth the arrow. Passing his lance from his right to his left hand, he leaned forward, and stooping over the neck of his horse, seized the dart, and endeavored to pull it forth. In his exertion, he leaned his head on one side so as to expose his neck, the only part of his person unprotected by armor. In an instant an arrow, tipped with flint, came with the swiftness of lightning, buried itself in his throat, and the poor youth fell from his horse mortally wounded, though he did not expire until the following day.

The Spaniards suffered severely in these repeated conflicts; but their loss was nothing in comparison with that of the Indians, who had no defensive armor, and on whom every blow was effective. Seeing the advantage that the horses gave the Spaniards in the open field, the Indians now shut themselves up within the village, closing the gates and manning the ramparts.

Upon this, the governor ordered the cavalry, being the best

armed, to dismount, and, taking bucklers for their defence, and battle-axes in their hands, to break open the gates, and strive to take the village by storm.

In an instant, a band of two hundred resolute cavaliers dashed forward to the assault. The Indians received them valiantly, and beat them back several times. The gate, however, was soon broken open by repeated blows, and they rushed in, pell-mell, amidst a shower of darts and stones The gate being too narrow to admit them all readily, others attacked the wall with their axes; demolished the facing of clay and straw, and, laying bare the cross-beams and their fastenings, aided each other to scramble up by them, and thus got into the village to the succor of their comrades.

The Indians fought desperately, both in the streets and from the tops of the houses. The Spaniards, galled by the missiles from the latter, and fearful that the enemy would retake the houses already gained, set fire to them. As they were of reeds and other combustible materials, they were soon wrapped in flames and smoke, adding to the horror of the scene.

While this conflict was raging in one part of the village, a kind of siege was going on in another. The Indians, the moment they had closed their gates, had turned their attention to the large house in the square, which had been assigned for the use of the governor's retinue, and in which all his camp equipage was deposited. They had not assailed it before, as they thought it perfectly in their power, and they now repaired to it merely to share the spoils. To their surprise, they found it strongly defended. Within were three cross-bow men and five halberdiers of the governor's guard, who usually accompanied his camp equipage, and an Indian, armed with bow and arrows, who had

been made prisoner by the Spaniards on their first landing, and had ever since proved faithful to them. Beside these fighting men, there was a priest and a friar, and two slaves belonging to the governor. One and all defended the house stoutly; the laymen with their weapons, the priests fervent in their devotions. The Indians tried in vain to gain the portal. They then mounted on the roof, and broke it open in three or four places; but so well did the cross-bow men and the Indian ply their weapons, that scarce did an enemy show himself at one of the openings, but he was transfixed by an arrow.

Thus did this little garrison maintain a desperate and almost hopeless defence, until De Soto and his bands, having fought their way into the village, as has been mentioned, arrived at the door of the dwelling and dispersed its assailants. The fighting part of the garrison mingled with their comrades and pursued the strife; the clerical part took refuge in the fields, where they could carry on their spiritual warfare with equal vigor and more security.

The wild and mingled affray had now lasted four hours, but nothing could quell the fury of the Indians, who disdained to yield or ask quarter. Many of the Spaniards, exhausted by the fierce strife, fainting and choked with thirst, ran to a pool of water, which was now crimsoned with the blood of the dead and dying, and having refreshed themselves, hastened back and rushed again into the battle.*

De Soto had hitherto fought on foot, but, as usual, waxing hot with action, he hastened out of the village, seized a horse, sprang into the saddle, and, followed by the brave Nuño Tobar, galloped back into the square, lance in hand, with the battle-cry of Our Lady of Santiago! Calling out to the Spaniards to make way

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 19.

for him, he dashed among the thickest of the enemy; Tobar followed close after him. They spurred their chargers up and down through the multitude in the square and the principal street; trampling down some, lancing others to the right and left, leaving a track of carnage wherever they passed.

In this wild melée, as the governor rose in his stirrups to lance an Indian, another, who was behind, aimed at the part exposed between the saddle and the cuirass, and buried an arrow in his thigh. De Soto had no time, in the confusion of the combat, to extract the arrow, which remained rankling in the wound for several hours, during which time, though unable to sit in his saddle, he continued fighting on horseback; a proof, says the Inca Garcilaso, not merely of his valor, but of his good horsemanship.

In the mean time, the fire was raging through the village, and made horrible ravages among the Indians. Those who were within doors, were consumed by the flames or stifled by the smoke: those who were fighting from the roofs, were either cut off by the fire, or obliged to throw themselves below. Many females perished in their dwellings.

At one time, the wind swept the flames and smoke along the street, upon the Indians; and while thus blinded and bewildered, the Spaniards charged upon them and drove them back; but the wind veering, favored them in turn, and they regained all the ground they had lost.

Maddened at seeing their ranks thinned and their warriors lying slaughtered in heaps, the Indians now called upon their women to seize the weapons of the slain and revenge their death. Many had already been fighting by the side of their husbands, but on this appeal, every one rushed into the conflict. Some armed themselves with the swords, lances, and partisans lost by

the soldiery, and thus wounded them with their own weapons; others seized bows and arrows, which they plied with almost equal strength and skill with their husbands. In their fury, they threw themselves before the men, and even rushed upon the weapons of their enemies; for the courage of woman, when once roused, is fierce and desperate, and her spirit more reckless and vehement than that of man. The Spaniards, however, had consideration for their sex, and pity for their despair, and abstained from slaying or wounding them.

CHAPTER LVI.

FALL OF TUSCALOOSA.

1540.

While the battle was thus raging at Mauvila, Luis de Moscoso, the master of the camp, was loitering by the way with his forces. Instead of following speedily after the vanguard led by the governor, he had sallied forth late from his encampment, and permitted his people to scatter themselves about the fields, hunting and amusing themselves. So long a time had elapsed since they had experienced any hostility from the natives, that they had lost all fear and precaution.

In this way, they straggled negligently and tardily forward, unsuspicious of any danger. At length, those in front heard the distant alarums of drum and trumpet, mingled with the yells and shouts of the combatants, and beheld a column of smoke rising in the air. Suspecting the cause, they passed back the alarm, from mouth to mouth, of those who were behind, and pressed forward with all speed to the scene of action. It was late in the afternoon before they reached it.

Among the foremost that arrived before the village, was the gallant Diego De Soto, nephew to the governor. Learning the fate of his cousin Don Carlos Enriquez, to whom he was tenderly

attached, he vowed to revenge his death. Throwing himself from his horse, and seizing a buckler, he rushed into the village, sword in hand, and plunged into the thickest of the fight. Scarce, however, had he entered, when an arrow pierced his eye and came out at the back of his head. He fell to the earth, never uttered another word, and died the following day in great agony. His death added to the affliction which the army felt for that of his brave cousin. The two young friends and relatives were thus united in death. They were generous spirits, worthy of each other's affection, and worthy nephews to such an uncle.

In the mean time, the rear-guard, as it arrived at the village, found great numbers of the Indians fighting in the adjacent fields, where the ground had been cleared and prepared for action. They assailed them vigorously, and had a long and obstinate combat; for many of the savage warriors had clambered over the walls, and swarmed into the field. At length the Indians were routed; many were pursued and cut to pieces by the horsemen, and but few escaped.

It was now near the hour of sunset, yet still the shouts and battle-cries of the combatants arose from the burning village. As yet, from the want of space, no horsemen had fought within the place, except De Soto and Nuño Tobar; but now a great number of the cavalry dashed in at the gate, scattering themselves through the streets, dispersing and killing all the Indians they encountered.

Ten or twelve of the cavaliers spurred up the main street, where the battle was hottest, and coming upon the rear of a throng of Indians, male and female, who were fighting with the fury of demons, they broke through them with such impetuosity, as not merely to overturn them, but also several of the Spaniards with

whom they were contending. The carnage was horrible, for the savages refused to surrender or to lay down their arms, but fought to the last gasp, until all were slain.

Here ended this bloody struggle, which had lasted for nine hours. The village remained a smoking ruin, covered with the slain, and victory declared for the Spaniards just as the sun went down. The last Indian warrior that wielded a weapon, was one of those fighting in the village. So blinded was he by fury, that he was unconscious of the fate of his comrades, until glancing his eye around, he saw them all lying dead. Seeing further contest hopeless, he turned to fly, and reaching the wall, sprang lightly to the top, thinking to escape into the fields. Here, however, to his dismay, he beheld squadrons of horse and foot below him, and the field covered with his slaughtered countrymen. Escape was impossible; death or slavery awaited him from the hands of his enemy. In his despair, he snatched the string from his bow, passed it round his neck, and fastening the other end to a branch of one of the trees that rose out of the rampart, he threw himself from the wall, and was strangled before the Spaniards had time to prevent it.

Such was the deadly battle of Mauvila, one of the most sanguinary, considering the number of the combatants, that had occurred among the discoverers of the new world. Forty-two Spaniards fell in the conflict; eighteen of them received their fatal wounds either in the eyes or the mouth, for the Indians, finding their bodies cased in armor, aimed at their faces. Scarce one of the Spaniards but was more or less wounded, some of them in many places. Thirteen died before their wounds could be dressed, and twenty-two afterwards, so that in all eighty-two were slain. To this loss must be added that of forty-two horses killed

by the Indians, and mourned by the Spaniards as if they had been so many fellow-soldiers.

As to the havoc among the Indians, it was almost incredible. Several thousand are said to have perished by fire and sword. The plain around the village was strewn with more than twenty-five hundred bodies. Within the walls, the streets were blocked up by the dead. A great number were consumed in the houses. In one building alone a thousand perished; the flames having entered by the door and prevented their escape, so that all were either burnt or suffocated: the greater part of these were females.

Among the dead which strewed the field without the walls, was found the body of Tuscaloosa the younger. As to the cacique himself, his fate was never satisfactorily ascertained. According to the Portuguese narrator, several Indian prisoners affirmed, that on the grand assault of the village by De Soto and his horsemen, the warriors of Tuscaloosa entreated him to withdraw from the village and put his person in safety, in order that, should they all perish in battle, as they all had resolved to do rather than turn their backs, he might survive to govern the country. The proud cacique at first resisted their entreaties, but at length yielded to their urgent supplications, and fled from the ill-fated town, accompanied by a small band of Indians, carrying with him his scarlet mantle and the choicest things he could find among the Spanish baggage. According to the Inca, however, the account generally believed by the Spaniards was, that he had perished in the flames; and this, in fact, comports most with his haughty, brave and patriotic spirit, which would scarcely permit him to survive so ruinous a defeat, and turn his back upon his town and people, in the moment of their most imminent peril.

He was evidently one of the bravest as well as proudest and most potent of the native princes. His name still remains in the land which he loved so well, and defended so desperately; and it is a name which deserves to be held in reverence, as that of a hero, and a patriot.

Note.—The Inca and the Portuguese narrator differ widely in their estimate of the killed and wounded in the action. Garcilaso de la Vega states the loss of the Spaniards to have been eighty-two, and of the Indians above eleven thousand. The Portuguese narrator states the Spanish loss to have been eighteen killed and one hundred and fifty wounded, and of the Indians twenty-five hundred slain; which is the number stated by the Inca to have been killed in the battle outside of the town. The statement of the Inca is given more in detail, and apparently with a more intimate knowledge of facts; having the statements of three several eye-witnesses, from which to make up his account. That of the Portuguese is rather vague and general. The estimate of the Inca may be somewhat exaggerated; yet it must be taken into consideration, that the Mauvilians were a numerous and powerful tribe, and were joined in this battle by the warriors of the neighboring provinces. Their number must consequently have been very great. Biedma says there were more than five thousand Indians. It is stated by both narrators, that they all fought to the last gasp, so that the slaughter must have been immense. In so desperate and protracted a conflict, the number of eighty-two slain on the part of the Spaniards, appears much more probable than that of eighteen.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE PLIGHT OF THE SPANIARDS AFTER THE BATTLE OF MAUVILA.

1540.

The situation of the Spaniards after the battle was truly deplorable. Most of them were severely wounded; all were exhausted by fatigue and hunger. The village was reduced to ashes around them, and all the baggage of the army, with its supplies of food and medicine, had been consumed in the houses.

The first care of the governor, though badly wounded himself, was for his troops. Having ordered that the dead should be collected together, to be decently interred on the following day, he directed that relief should be administered to the wounded. Here, however, was the difficulty. There was but one surgeon in the army, and he was slow and unskilful. There were at least seventeen hundred grievous wounds, requiring a surgeon's care; several having fallen to the share of a single soldier. The mere flesh wounds were left for the patient himself to cure; but those in the joints, and other critical parts, which threatened to maim or disable the patient, required great attention. Unfortunately, they had neither ointments nor medicines of any kind, nor linen for bandages; all had been consumed. Not even shelter from

the cold and dew of the night was to be found; for, not a house of the village remained standing. At length, boughs and branches were brought from the cabins that had been erected without the village, and sheds were put up against such of the walls as were still standing, under which the wounded were conveyed for shelter, and straw spread for their reception. Those who were least harmed exerted themselves to succor their suffering companions. Some opened the bodies of the dead Indians, and took their fat for ointment; others took off their own shirts, and those of their slaughtered comrades, to make bandages for the disabled. As these were of linen, they were allotted to the severest wounds; for those which were not so grievous, they made use of their doublets, and the lining of their hose, or other materials of a coarser kind.

Others flayed and cut up the horses, preserving their flesh for the sustenance of the wounded. With all their zeal and exertions, however, a number died miserably, before any relief could be administered to them. Thus passed that wretched night, amid bitter lamentations and dying groans. Those who were able to bear arms, patrolled as sentinels, and maintained a vigilant watch, expecting to be assailed.

Eight days did the wounded Spaniards remain in these miserable shelters within the village: when able, at length, to go forth, they removed to the cabins which the Indians had erected without the walls, where they were more comfortably quartered. Here fifteen days more were passed. In the mean time, those who were least disabled sallied forth on foraging expeditions about the country, for four leagues in circuit, and found supplies of provisions in the numerous deserted hamlets scattered around.

In every thicket and ravine they found dead or dying Indians,

who had not been able to reach their homes. Many, also, had taken shelter in the hamlets, and lay there, apparently without any one to minister to them. It was understood, however, that their friends came with nourishment to them in the night, but returned to their retreats in the forests before the dawn of day. The Spaniards treated these poor savages with kindness, sharing their food among them.

The troopers, in their foray into the forests, captured fifteen or twenty of the natives. On being asked whether their people were meditating another attack, they replied that their bravest warriors had fallen in the battle, and none were left to make a head of war. Their information appeared to be the truth; for, during all the time that the Spaniards remained in their encampment, no Indian ventured nigh them

From the prisoners thus taken, and others captured in the village, they inquired, concerning the past stratagems and designs of Tuscaloosa, which had wrought such mischief.

That fierce and warlike chieftain, from the time he first heard of the approach of the Spaniards towards his dominions, had meditated their destruction. With that object, he had sent his son, with a train of warriors, to watch their movements; and had enlisted the natives of the contiguous provinces in his plot, promising to share with them the spoils of the Spaniards.

The women, too, most of whom had accompanied their husbands and lovers from the neighboring provinces, declared they had been enticed to Mauvila, by promises of rich robes of scarlet cloth, and silks, and linen, and velvet, with which to decorate themselves for their dances; they were to have had horses, upon which to ride in triumph, and Spaniards given to them as slaves. Others came to be present at a great feast and rejoicing they

were to hold after their victory; and others again, to witness the prowess and exploits of their lovers.

Tuscaloosa, on arriving at the village with the Adelantado, had held a council of war with his principal warriors, wherein it was debated whether they should attack the vanguard which had arrived, or wait until they had the whole within their power. It is probable that the heat and impatience of the Indian general caused the plot to explode before the appointed time.

It has been shown, that in the burning of the village the Spaniards lost all their baggage and private effects. What gave them the greatest concern, however, was the loss of a little portion of wine and wheaten flour, which they had carefully treasured up for the performance of mass. All the sacerdotal dresses, also the chalices, and other articles of worship, were destroyed; but the loss of the wheaten flour was irreparable. Consultations were held between the ecclesiastics and the laymen, whether bread made of maize might not be adopted, in case of extremity; but it was decided, that the use of any thing but wheat was contrary to the canons of the church.

From thenceforward, therefore, on Sundays and Saints' days, they prepared an altar, and the priest officiated, arrayed in robes of dressed deer skin, fashioned in imitation of his sacerdotal dresses; and they performed all parts of the ceremony, excepting the consecration of the bread and wine. This constituted what the Spaniards called "a dry mass."

CHAPTER LVIII.

DE SOTO BECOMES AN ALTERED MAN, AND WHY.

1540.

While at the village of Mauvila, overwhelmed with care and anxiety, the governor was unexpectedly cheered by tidings, that ships with white men in them had arrived on the sea-coast, towards which he was shaping his course. A rumor of this kind he had heard before the battle, and it was confirmed by some of the prisoners taken in the village. He further learnt from them that the port or bay of Achusi or Pensacola, where he had directed Gomez Arias and Diego Maldonado to rendezvous with their ships, was not more than seven days' journey distant.* He doubted not, therefore, that the ships in question were commanded by those officers, and brought reinforcements and supplies from Spain, for his projected settlement. He now considered himself on the eve of accomplishing all his wishes; of founding that colony which would assure the possession of the country he had explored, and enable him to pursue to advantage his search for gold.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 19. The Inca states the distance as about thirty leagues.

He had brought with him thus far the cacique, made prisoner by Maldonado at the port of Achusi. He had always treated him with kindness, but had not sent him to his home before because of the distance, and the danger he would run of being killed or captured by the way. Learning, however, that the road was now secure, he granted him permission to return; at the same time earnestly charging him to preserve the friendship of the Spaniards, who would soon be guests in his country. The cacique departed, with expressions of gratitude for the kindness he had experienced, and assurances to the governor, that he would be happy to welcome him to his territory.

The ships, which De Soto regarded as the means of conquest and colonization, many of his followers only looked forward to as means of escape out of a disastrous country. Some of them had been engaged in the conquest of Peru, and contrasted the wealth of that golden empire with the poverty of the land through which they had struggled, where neither gold nor silver was to be found; and they did not fail to dwell upon this contrast when conversing with their companions. The Spaniards, generally, were disheartened by the disasters of the recent battle, and the implacable fierceness displayed by the natives. They saw that such a people were not easily to be subjugated. Instead, therefore of wearing themselves out in this fated land, it seemed better to seek others already conquered, and abounding with wealth, as Mexico and Peru, where they might enrich themselves with less risk and toil. For these reasons, they determined, on reaching the sea-shore, to abandon this disastrous country, and seek their fortunes in New Spain.

Secret information of these rumors was brought to De Soto, by some of his most devoted followers. He could scarcely credit

it, and went round the camp at night, alone and in disguise, to ascertain the truth. In this way, he overheard a conversation in the hut of Juan Gaytan, the treasurer, in which that cavalier and several of his comrades expressed their determination to abandon the enterprise and sail for Mexico or Peru, or return to Spain in the ships at Achusi.

De Soto stood aghast at hearing these resolves. He saw that his present force would disband the moment his followers could shift for themselves; while he was aware that it would be impossible for him to raise a new army. He had no booty of gold and silver to display, with which to tempt new adventurers; and, as to the specimens of pearls which he had intended to send to Cuba, they were all lost in the conflagration of Mauvila. Should his present forces desert him, therefore, he would remain stripped of dignity and command, blasted in reputation, his fortune expended in vain, and his enterprise, which had cost so much toil and trouble, a subject of scoffing, rather than renown. The governor was a man extremely jealous of his honor; and as he reflected upon these gloomy prospects, they produced sudden and desperate resolves. He disguised his anger, and his knowledge of the schemes he had overheard; but he determined to frustrate them, by turning his back upon the coast, striking again into the interior, and never seeking the ships, nor furnishing any tidings of himself, until he had crowned his enterprise gloriously, by discovering new regions of wealth, like those of Peru and Mexico.*

A change came over De Soto from this day. He was disconcerted in his favorite scheme of colonization, and had lost confidence in his followers. Instead of manifesting his usual frankness, energy, and alacrity, he became a moody, irritable, discon-

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. iii. c. 22. Portuguese Relation.

tented man. He no longer pretended to strike out any grand undertaking; but, stung with secret disappointment, went recklessly wandering from place to place, apparently without order or object, as if careless of time and life, and only anxious to finish his existence.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE ADELANTADO BREAKS UP HIS ENCAMPMENT AT MAUVILA—MANNER OF CROSSING A RIVER—THE PASS STOUTLY DEFENDED BY THE INDIANS.

1540.

It was on Sunday the 18th of November, that De Soto, finding his troops sufficiently recovered from their wounds to bear the march, broke up his encampment at Mauvila and turned his face northward, to penetrate provinces which he had not yet visited. His feelings and motives for thus turning his back upon the sea-coast he kept to himself; he was always a man strict and peremptory in exacting military obedience, and if his troops murmured among themselves at the route he chose, it is probable they were overawed and reduced to tacit obedience by the increased sternness of his manner.

The soldiers were provided with two days' provisions of maize, yet they were five days traversing a pleasant though uninhabited country, until they entered the province of Chicaza.* The first village at which they arrived was called Cabusto. It was the

* The Portuguese narrator says they entered into the province of Pafallaya, but Biedma calls it Chicaza.

principal one of the province, and was seated on a river, wide and deep, with high banks.*

The governor, as usual, sent proffers of peace to the inhabitants, but they were rejected with scorn. "War is what we want," was the reply, "a war of fire and blood." Approaching the village, the Spaniards saw drawn out before it more than fifteen hundred warriors. These skirmished with them for a time, but overpowered by the fury of their attack, fled to the river; some sprang into canoes, others plunged into the water, and thus they soon crossed to the opposite bank, where their main force, to the number of eight thousand warriors, was posted to dispute the passage.

The Spaniards found the village perfectly stripped and abandoned; for the inhabitants had sent off all their effects, with their wives and children, and prepared for war. They had determined to risk no open battle, but to dispute the pass of the river, which, on account of its depth and its high banks, they could easily do. For this purpose they had stretched their forces for two leagues along the opposite bank, and hoped to compel the army to take a different route.

When night closed in, the Indians annoyed the Spaniards greatly, by sudden attacks and frequent alarms. They would cross the river in their canoes at different places, and then, uniting in a band, attack the camp. The Spaniards made use of stratagem in their defence. There were three landing-places where the Indians disembarked. Here they dug pits, in which the archers and arquebusiers concealed themselves. As soon as they saw the Indians leap on shore and leave their canoes, they

* Supposed to be the Black Warrior, or Tuscaloosa river, and Cabusto is thought to have been near the present site of Erie, in Greene county.

would rush out, sword in hand, and cut off their retreat. Three several times did they maltreat them in this manner, after which the Indians adventured not again to attempt to land; but contented themselves with vigilantly guarding the passage of the river.

The governor now ordered one hundred of the most skilful men to build two large boats, or piraguas, nearly flat, and very spacious. That the Indians might not perceive their operations, he directed them to be built in a forest, which was a league and a half up the river, and about a league from its banks.

So assiduous were the workmen, that in twelve days the piraguas were finished. To transport them to the river, two carriages were constructed, on which they were drawn by mules and horses, and pushed forward by men, and in the most difficult places carried on their shoulders. In this way, one morning before daybreak, they were conveyed to the river and launched, where there were convenient landing-places on either bank.

De Soto, who was present at the launching of the boats, ordered ten horse and forty infantry to embark in each, and hasten to cross before the Indians should gather to oppose them. The infantry were to row, and the horsemen to keep their saddles, not to lose time in mounting when they should reach the opposite shore.

Notwithstanding, however, the silence observed by the Spaniards in launching their boats, they were discovered by a band of about five hundred savages, who occupied the opposite bank. These gave a loud yell to spread the alarm, and rushed down to dispute the landing-place.

The Spaniards, fearing the enemy might gather in greater numbers, hurried to embark. De Soto would have gone in the first boat, but his followers prevented his exposing himself to this unnecessary hazard.

Those in the first bark bent to their oars, and quickly attained the opposite bank, amid a shower of arrows; by which every Spaniard was more or less wounded. The first horseman who leaped on shore was Diego Garcia, and close behind him came Gonzalo Silvestre; together they charged upon the enemy, drove them in, and pursued them for more than two hundred paces. Fearing to be surrounded, they then turned their reins, and spurred back to their companions. In this manner, now charging, now retreating, these hardy cavaliers fought alone, for a short time; in the fifth charge, however, they were joined by some horsemen, and were enabled to keep the Indians in check.

The infantry, the moment they landed, made for the shelter of a hamlet, hard by, and dared not to sally out, as their number was very small, and every soldier more or less hurt. The second bark in the mean time, in which was De Soto, was carried down the current. The troops attempted to land, but found it impracticable on account of the high, steep banks; they were, therefore, compelled to pull up the stream, with great labor, to the landing-place; which by this time was cleared of the enemy. De Soto, with seventy or eighty Spaniards at his back, leaped on shore and hastened to the relief of those who were battling in the plain.

On their approach the Indians retreated, and seeing the Spaniards had effected a landing, they collected their forces, and fortified themselves with palisades in a swamp covered with reeds, from whence they made frequent sallies; but were as often driven back, and laneed by the cavalry. Thus the day passed in unimportant skirmishes, the troops crossed the river without molestation, and at nightfall every Indian vanished.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. iii. c. 35. Portuguese Narrative, c. 20.

CHAPTER LX.

DE SOTO SENDS A MESSENGER TO THE NATIVES WITH OFFERS OF PEACE—HIS TREATMENT—ENCAMP IN A CHICKASAW VILLAGE—TWO SOLDIERS CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

1540.

THE country in the neighborhood of the river was level and fertile, with small scattered hamlets, in which the Spaniards found quantities of maize and dried pulse. Having broken up the piraguas for the sake of the nails, they resumed their march, and, after travelling five days through a desert country, came to another river,* where the Indians were collected together to dispute the passage. Unwilling to expose his men to further loss, De Soto halted for two days, until a canoe had been constructed, in which he sent over an Indian messenger to the cacique, with offers of peace and friendship. The savages seized the messenger, massacred him on the banks of the river, in sight of the Spaniards, and then, as if satisfied with this insulting sacrifice, dispersed with horid yells.†

There being no longer any enemy to oppose his passage, De Soto conducted his troops across the stream, and then marched onward until, on the 18th of December, he arrived at the village of

* Supposed to be the Tombigbe. † Portuguese Relation, c. 20.

Chicaza, from which the province took its name * It stood upon a gentle hill, stretching from north to south, watered on either side by a small stream, bordered by groves of walnut and oak trees.

The weather was now severe, with snow and ice, and the troops suffered extremely in their encampments. The governor, therefore, determined to take up his winter quarters at Chicaza. For this purpose he ordered wood and straw to be brought from the neighboring hamlets, wherewith to construct houses; for, notwithstanding there were two hundred in the village, they were too small to shelter the army.

Nearly two months the Spaniards remained in this encampment, enjoying some quietude and repose. The cavalry daily scoured the fields, and captured the Indians, whom the governor sent to the cacique with presents and offers of peace and friendship. The cacique made favorable replies, promising, from day to day, to visit the camp, but as often excusing his delay, and sending presents of fruit, fish, and venison. De Soto gave the principal warriors of this chieftain a feast, at which was served up some pork, which the Indians had never before tasted, and so palatable and delicious did they find it, that from this time they would prowl about the encampment every night, to steal and

* Considering the nature of the country through which they passed, agreeing with the modern accounts of that region, the direction of the march, the time, and the distance, it is very evident that this was the country of the Chickasaws, in the upper part of the State of Mississippi; and this village probably stood on the western bank of the Yazoo, a branch of the Mississippi, about eighty leagues to the north-west of Mobile. Charlevoix remarks, "Garcilaso de la Vega parle des Chicachas dans son Histoire de la Conqueste de la Floride, et il les place à peu près au même endroit, où ils sont encore présentement."—Vide Charlevoix, Jour. Hist. Let. xxix. p. 408; Belknap's Am. Biography, Vol. i. p. 191; Flint's Geog. and Hist. of the Mississippi, Vol. i. p. 497

kill the swine. Two Indians, who were caught in the act, were shot to death, by order of the governor, and a third had his hands cut off, and was sent to his cacique as an example and warning to the other Indians.

About this time, four soldiers repaired to the dwelling of the cacique, about a league from the camp, without the permission of the governor, and carried off by force some skins and mantles, which so enraged the Indians, that many of them abandoned their homes. When De Soto heard of this violence, he had them all arrested; condemned the two ringleaders, Francisco Osorio and one Fuentez, to death, and confiscated the goods of all the four culprits.

The priests and officers of the army supplicated the general to mitigate the sentence, and begged the life of Francisco Osorio. De Soto, however, was inflexible. The unfortunate criminals were led forth into the public square to be beheaded. At this moment a party of Indians arrived, being sent by the cacique, to make his complaints. This event, which seemed calculated to hasten the death of the Spaniards, was the means of their salvation. Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, instigated by Baltazar de Gallegos, and other officers of rank, cunningly gave a false interpretation of the complaints of the indignant chieftain. He told the governor that the cacique had sent these Indians to say, that the soldiers were not guilty, and had in no wise offended him, and that he would consider it as a great favor if they were pardoned and set at liberty. Upon this the governor pardoned the criminals.* On the other hand, Ortiz assured the Indians, that the soldiers who had injured them were in prison, and that the governor would punish them in such an exemplary manner, as to serve as an example to all others.

* Portuguese Narration, c. 20.

In the mean time, the subjects of this cacique kept up constant alarms at night, as if about to assail the village: but the moment the soldiers sallied out, they would take to flight. The governor suspected, however, that these were but sham attacks, intended to render his sentinels careless and off their guard when a real attack should be made. He exhorted his camp-master, Luis de Mascoso, therefore, to be unceasing in his vigilance, and to maintain a strict watch upon the camp at night. His suspicions and expectations were correct, though unfortunately they were but little heeded.

CHAPTER LXI.

THE DESPERATE BATTLE OF CHICAZA.

1541.

A DARK and cloudy night, when a north wind was blowing furiously, was chosen by the cacique for a grand assault upon the village. Dividing his forces into three bands, to make the attack at three several places, he led on the centre one in person, and approached in the dead of the night, with such silence, as to arrive within a hundred paces of the sentinels without being perceived. Having learnt by his scouts that the two other bands were equally advanced, he gave the signal of attack.

Immediately the air resounded with the blasts of conch shells, the rumbling of wooden drums, and the yells and war whoops of the savages, who rushed like demons to the assault. Many had lighted matches, like cords, made of a vegetable substance, which whirled in the air, would blaze up into a flame; others had arrows tipped with the same. These they hurled upon the houses, which being of reeds and straw, instantly took fire, and, the wind blowing strongly, were soon wrapped in flames.*

* According to Biedma, the Indians having learned where the Spanish sentinels were posted, entered two by two an unguarded part of the village; and with the fire, which they concealed in small pots, soon set the place in a blaze, just as the war-whoop of another band arose from without.

The Spaniards, although surprised by this sudden and furious assault, rushed out to defend themselves. De Soto, who always slept in his doublet and hose, that he might be prepared for such emergencies, clasped on his casque, drew on a surcoat of quilted cotton, three fingers in thickness, the best defence against the arrows of the savages, and seizing buckler and lance, mounted his horse, and dashed fearlessly into the midst of the enemy. Ten or twelve horsemen followed him, though not immediately.

The soldiers in every direction started up, with their wonted spirit, to battle with the Indians; but they labored under great disadvantages. The strong wind, which blew the flames and smoke directly in their faces, greatly disconcerted them. Some were obliged to crawl out of their quarters on all fours, to escape the raging flames; some, bewildered, fled from house to house; others rushed out into the plain; and some flew to rescue the sick and the wounded, who were in a dwelling apart. Before succor arrived, however, many of them had perished in the flames.

The cavalry had not time to arm themselves, or saddle their steeds. Some led theirs forth, and hurried them from the flames; others, who had fastened up their horses with iron chains, on account of their being restiff from high feeding, could not cast them loose in the hurry, and had to leave them to their fate, and fly for their own lives. A few who were enabled to mount galloped to the assistance of the governor, who, with his scanty number of followers, had been battling for a long time with the enemy. The other two bands of Indians entered the village and attacked the Spaniards on each flank; and, aided by the fire and smoke, made great havoc.

Forty or fifty of the soldiers who were at the eastern end of the village, where the flames and the battle raged most fiercely

fled into the fields. Nuño Tobar rushed after them, sword in hand, his coat of mail left unbuckled in the hurry. "Turn, soldiers! turn," cried he, "whither are you flying? Here is neither Cordova nor Seville to give you refuge. Your safety lies in your courage, and in the vigor of your arms; not in flight. At this moment thirty soldiers, from a part of the village which the flames had not reached, came up to intercept the fugitives. They taunted the recreant Spaniards with their shameful flight, and inducing them to join forces, they hastened together to renew the combat.

At this time, Andres de Vasconcelos, with twenty-four chosen cavaliers of his company, all Portuguese hidalgos, most of whom had served as horsemen in the wars on the African frontier, charged on the main body of the enemy. He was accompanied by Nuño Tobar, on foot. The fury of their attack forced the savages to retire.

This timely reinforcement gave new courage to the handful of Spaniards, who, headed by the governor, were fighting in that quarter. De Soto had marked an Indian warrior, who had fought with great fury and success. Closing in with him, he gave him a thrust of the lance; and charging upon him, and leaning with all his force upon the right stirrup to repeat the blow, the saddle, which had been left ungirt in the confusion of the assault, slipped off, and De Soto fell with it in the midst of the enemy. The Spaniards, seeing his peril, dashed in, horse and foot, to his rescue, and kept the Indians at bay, until he was extricated and his steed saddled, when, vaulting upon his back, he pricked again into the fight.

The Indians, at length completely vanquished, fled from the field of battle. De Soto, with his troopers, pursued them as long as they could be distinguished by the light of the burning village;

then ordering the recall to be sounded, he returned to ascertain his loss. He found it greater than he had imagined. Forty Spaniards had fallen in the combat. Among the dead was a Spanish woman, the wife of a worthy soldier, and the only female who had accompanied the army. Her husband had left her behind when he rushed forth to fight. She had escaped from the house, but returned to save some pearls; the flames cut off her second retreat, and she was found afterwards burned to death.

Fifty horses, also, had perished, and many more were wounded. Above twenty of them had been either burnt or shot down with arrows, in the houses where their masters had been obliged to leave them tied up. The darts had been skilfully aimed at the most vital parts. One horse had two shafts through the heart, shot from opposite directions. Another horse, and one of the broadest and heaviest in the army, was shot by such a vigorous arm, that the arrow had passed through both shoulders, and four fingers' breadth beyond.

Another loss, which grieved the Spaniards, was that of the swine which they had brought with them, to stock their projected settlement. These had been shut up in an inclosure roofed with straw, and nearly all perished in the flames.

In examining the bodies of the Indians killed in the battle, the Spaniards found three cords wound round several of them. These, it is said, they had brought to secure their anticipated spoils; one being intended to bind a Spanish captive, another to lead off a horse, and the third to tie up a hog. The story, however, savors strongly of camp gossip.

This disastrous battle, following on the ruinous one of Mauvila, increased the gloom and exasperation of spirit of De Soto. He made strict inquiry into the night attack, and the circum-

stances which had enabled the enemy to approach, undiscovered, and surprise them so fatally. All this he attributed to gross negligence, on the part of Luis de Moscoso, in respect to placing sentinels and going the rounds. He had probably been already provoked by the tardy arrival of Moscoso on the fatal battle-field of Mauvila; and now, in this additional cause of vexation, forgot his feelings of friendship to his old brother in arms. In his indignation he deposed Moscoso from his post of master of the camp, and appointed in his place the bold Baltazar de Gallegos.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. iii. c. 36, 37. Portuguese Narrative, c. 20 Biedma in Recueil de Pièces sur la Floride, par H. Ternaux-Compans.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE SPANIARDS REMOVE TO CHICACILLA—OCCURRENCES THERE—THE EXPLOIT OF JUAN DE GUZMAN—THE INVENTION OF ONE OF THE SOLDIERS AS A PROTECTION AGAINST THE COLD.

1541.

THREE days after the battle, the Spaniards shifted their encampment to a more advantageous position, about a league distant, which they called Chicacilla.* Here they set up a forge, and busied themselves in newly tempering their swords, injured by the fire, and in making saddles, and shields, and lances, to replace those which had been consumed.

In this village they sojourned the remainder of the winter, suffering grievously from the extreme cold. They were in wretched plight, having saved no clothing from the late battle, except what they chanced to have on their backs. When the savages learnt the extent of the havoc they had made, their fierce spirits were aroused anew, and they hovered every night round the camp, making repeated assaults, and sounding frequent alarms. The Spaniards, lest the Indians should fire the houses, as they had done those of Chicaza, remained all the night long without the village, arrayed in four different squadrons, with sentries posted.

* That is, a Little Chicaza.

They were obliged to maintain a vigilant watch, for the savages burst upon them at all hours. In these nocturnal skirmishes, many were killed and wounded on both sides.

Every morning De Soto dispatched four or five parties of horse, in different directions, to scour the country. They cut down every Indian they encountered, and always returned at sunset, with the assurance that there was not an Indian breathing within four leagues. In four or five hours afterwards, however, hordes of Indians would attack them. It seemed almost incredible that the savages could have assembled in so short a time.

One night a band of Indians approached warily the place where Captain Juan de Guzman, with his company, were posted. De Guzman, perceiving them by the light of the blazing fagots, sprang upon his horse, and, followed by five horsemen and a few foot, charged down upon them. De Guzman, who was a cavalier of unflinching spirit, though of a delicate form, singled out an Indian in the vanguard, who carried a banner, and made a lunge at him with his lance. The Indian, avoiding the blow, caught the lance with his right hand, wrested it from De Guzman, then seized him by the collar, and giving him a violent jerk, hurled him from the saddle to his feet; all this while holding the banner in his left hand.

The soldiers, witnessing the imminent danger of their leader, rushed in, cut the Indian to pieces, and put the whole band of savages to rout. The troopers dashed after them in hot pursuit. The ground favored the movements of the horse, and the Spaniards would have signally avenged their late disaster, had not their career been suddenly arrested by the cry of "To the camp! to the camp!" At this startling summons, they wheeled about and galloped back to the encampment, and thus the fugitives escaped.

The alarm was raised by one of the monks, who was fearful that the troopers, in their vengeful pursuit, might fall into some ambush of the enemy. Forty Indians fell in this affray. The Spaniards lost two of their steeds, and two were wounded.

The army remained in this encampment until the end of March. Besides being unceasingly harassed by the enemy, they suffered bitterly from the cold, which was rigorous in the extreme; especially to men who had to pass every night under arms, with scarce any clothing.

In this extremity, however, they were relieved by the ingenuity of one of the common soldiers. He succeeded in making a matting, four fingers in thickness, of a long and soft kind of grass, or dried ivy, one half of which served as a mattress, and the other half was turned over as a blanket. He likewise made many others for his companions, who all assisted him in the manufacture.

These rustic beds were brought every night to the main guard, and, with their aid, those who were on duty were enabled to endure the severe cold of the winter nights. The army also found abundant provisions of maize and dried fruits in the neighborhood.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. iii. c. 39. Portuguese Narrative, c. 21.

CHAPTER LXIII.

JUAN DE ANASCO, AND A DETACHMENT OF HORSE AND FOOT, HAVE A BRUSH WITH THE NATIVES; AND HOW HE WAS TAUNTED BY THEM —STORMING OF THE FORTRESS OF ALIBAMO—CHALLENGE OF AN INDIAN WARRIOR, AND HOW HE FARED IN CONSEQUENCE.

1541.

On the first of April, the army broke up their encampment. They journeyed four leagues the first day, through a champaign country thickly studded with small hamlets, and halted in a plain beyond the territory of Chicaza; vainly fancying that the Indians, now that they had left their province, would no longer molest them.

A strong party of horse and foot, commanded by Juan de Añasco, which was foraging for provisions, came in sight of an Indian fortress, garrisoned by a great body of savages, who looked like devils rather than men. Their bodies were painted in stripes, white, black, and red, as if clothed with fantastic garments. Their faces were blackened, and they had red circles round their eyes, which gave them a ferocious aspect; while some wore feathers upon their heads, and others horns. On seeing the Spaniards they sallied forth, shouting and yelling, and beating wooden drums.

De Añasco retreated to an open field within a cross-bow shot

of the fortress, and drew up his cross-bow men with their bucklers before the horses, to protect them. In this way he received the light skirmishing assaults of the Indians. The latter, seeing the inferiority of the Spaniards, taunted them from a distance, by a singular piece of mummery. Having kindled a great fire in front of their fort, they pretended to knock one of their companions on the head with a club, and then swung him by the feet and shoulders, as if they would throw him into the flames: thereby giving the Spaniards to understand the treatment they were to expect. Juan de Añasco was of too irritable a temperament to bear such taunts patiently, but felt the insufficiency of his force to attack the fortress. He dispatched, therefore, three troopers to the governor, to entreat assistance.

Leaving one third of the infantry and cavalry to guard the camp, De Soto immediately marched out with the remainder, to the assault of the fort, which was called Alibamo.* This fortress was built in the form of a quadrangle, of strong palisades. The four sides were each four hundred paces in length. Within, the fort was traversed from side to side by two other palisades, dividing it into separate parts. In the outer wall were three portals, so low and narrow that a man could not enter them mounted on horse. Passing through these, appeared the other wall, with three entrances, and behind that a third; so that if the outer wall were gained, the garrison could retreat to the second, and so on. In the last wall were three portals, opening upon a narrow and deep river, that flowed in the rear of the fort.† So high were

* We give the name according to the Inca. Biedma calls it Alibamo, and the Portuguese narrator Alimamu. Mr. Meek says, this is no doubt the original of the word Alabama,—which signifies, in the Muscoghee tongue, '*Here we rest.*'

† Supposed to be the Yazoo river, in the county of Tallahatchie. In the

the banks of this stream, that it was exceedingly difficult to clamber up them on foot, and they were inaccessible for horse. A few rude and dilapidated bridges were thrown across the river, affording a difficult passage.

The Indians had constructed their fort in this manner, that the Spaniards might not avail themselves of their horses, but be obliged to battle with them foot to foot, when they fancied they were not only equal but even superior to their enemies.

De Soto, having carefully reconnoitred the fortress, ordered a hundred of the best armed horsemen to dismount, and, forming three squadrons, advance, three abreast, and commence the attack; whilst the foot, who were less completely cased in defensive armor, should support their rear; and, together, they should strive to seize the three entrances. The slight formed but brave Juan de Guzman led on one of the squadrons; Alonso Romo de Cardeñosa, another; and the stout Gonzalo Silvestre, the third.

The Indians, who had until this moment remained shut up in their fortress, perceiving the preparations of the Spaniards for

valuable work of Squier and Davis, published by the Smithsonian Institute, there is a description, furnished by the Rev. R. Morris, of some works in this region, which he is disposed to ascribe to De Soto, but which are probably the remains of this or a similar fortification thrown up by the natives, and so frequently noticed in every account of De Soto's expedition. It is very judiciously observed by these gentlemen, that "had Hernando de Soto erected one tenth of the works which have been ascribed to him, in the States bordering the Gulf, in Tennessee, and even in Kentucky, he must have found ample demands on his time and exertions. It is most likely, however, that the intervals between his tedious and toilsome marches were occupied more profitably, if not less laboriously, than in the erection of vast earth structures of this description, which, when finished, could not possibly have served him any useful purpose. His handful of weary followers probably found in a small stockade of logs a better defence, and one more obviously within their capabilities of construction."

the assault, sallied out to battle, a hundred men from each portal. At the first discharge, Diego de Castro, Luis Bravo, and Francisco de Figueroa, were brought to the ground, mortally wounded. All three were pierced in the thigh, with arrows barbed with flint; for the savages, having gained some experience during their warfare with the Spaniards, always aimed at the thigh, which was never guarded. The Spaniards, seeing their companions fall, shouted to one another to rush in, and leave the Indians no time to gall them with their arrows. They charged furiously, and drove the enemy before them, to the very portals of the fortress.

While Juan de Añasco and Andres de Vasconcelos attacked the savages on the flank, De Soto, with twenty horse, charged upon the other. As the governor was spurring onward, an arrow struck him upon his casque with such force that it rebounded a pike's length in the air, and De Soto confessed afterwards that it made his eyes flash fire. Pressed by the united shock of horse and foot, the Indians made for the entrances of the fort, but these were so narrow that a great number were slaughtered without the walls. The Spaniards rushed in, pell-mell, with them.

The carnage within the fortress was dreadful. The Indians were crowded together, and the Spaniards, remembering the injuries they had received from them during the past winter, gave loose to their rage, and massacred them without mercy. As they wore no defensive armor, they were easily dispatched. Many, trusting to their agility, leaped the wall into the plains, and, falling into the hands of the soldiers, were instantly slain. Many escaped, by the portals in the rear, to the bridges; but in their haste to cross, several were jostled into the river, which flowed at a great distance beneath. Others, pressed by the enemy, threw themselves from the banks and swam across. In a short time,

the fortress was abandoned and in the power of the Spaniards; while those Indians who reached the opposite bank placed themselves in battle array.

One of the savages who had escaped, desirous of showing his skill with the bow and arrow, separated himself from his companions, and shouted to the Spaniards, giving them to understand, by signs and words, that he challenged any archer to come out and have a shot with him, to prove which man was the better marksman. Upon this, Juan de Salinas, a brave Austrian hidalgo, who with some companions had sheltered himself among trees from the arrows, stepped forth, and walking down to the bank of the river, took his stand opposite to the Indian. One of his companions called to him to wait until he should come to guard him with his shield; but Salinas refused to take any advantage of his enemy. He placed an arrow in his cross-bow, while the Indian also selected one from his quiver, and both drew at the same moment.

The dart of Juan de Salinas took effect, and pierced the Indian's breast. He would have fallen, but was received in the arms of his companions, who bore him away, more dead than alive. The Indian's arrow pierced the Spaniard in the nape of the neck, and remained crossed in the wound. Salinas returned with it in this state to his comrades, well pleased with his success. The comrades of the fallen Indian allowed him to depart without molestation, as the challenge had been man to man.

The Adelantado, determined to punish the impudence and daring of these Indians, called on the cavalry to follow him; and, crossing the river by an easy ford above the fort, galloped out upon the plain; then, charging upon the savages, he pursued them for more than a league, with great slaughter; and had

night not interposed, not one would have survived to tell the tale. As it was, the carnage was very great.

When the Spaniards gave up the pursuit, they returned to their encampment, and halted there four days until the wounded were restored. Fifteen subsequently died. Of these were the three cavaliers who had fallen at the commencement of the battle. They were greatly lamented by their companions, for they were noble, young, and valiant; not one of them had reached his twenty-fifth year.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. iii. c. 35. Portuguese Narrative, c. 20. Biedma in Recueil de Pièces sur la Floride, par H. Ternaux-Compans.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE SPANIARDS COME IN SIGHT OF THE MISSISSIPPI—THE CACIQUE CHISCA—HIS HOSTILE MOVEMENTS.

1541.

After four days the Spaniards departed from the encampment of Alibamo, still marching towards the north, to avoid the sea. For seven days they traversed an uninhabited country, full of forests and swamps, where they had sometimes to swim their horses.* At length they came in sight of a village, called Chisca. It was seated near a wide and rapid river, and as it was the largest they had discovered in Florida, they called it Rio Grande. This was the "Father of Waters," the mighty Mississippi.† De Soto was the first European who looked out upon the turbid waters of this magnificent river, and that event has more surely enrolled his name among those who will ever live in American history, than if he had discovered mines of gold and silver. The

* Portuguese Relation, c. 22.

† The Inca, on the authority of Juan Coles, one of the followers of De Soto, says, that the Indian name of the river was Chucagua. The Portuguese narrator says, that in one place it was called Tumaliscu; in another Tapata; in another Mico; and at that part where it enters into the sea, Ri. It is probable it had different names among the different Indian tribes. The village of Chisca is called Quizquiz, by the Portuguese narrator.

Indians of this province, owing to their unceasing warfare with the natives of Chicaza, and the country lying between them being unpeopled, knew nothing of the approach of the strangers. The moment the Spaniards descried the village, they rushed into it in a disorderly manner, took many prisoners, of both sexes and of all ages, and pillaged the houses.

On a high artificial mound, on one side of the village, stood the dwelling of the cacique, which served as a fortress. The only ascent to it was by two ladders Many of the Indians took refuge there, whilst others fled to a dense wood, that arose between the village and the river. Chisca, the chieftain of the province, was very old, and lying ill in his bed. Hearing the tumult and shouts, however, he raised himself and went forth; and as he beheld the sacking of his village and the capture of his vassals, he seized a tomahawk and began to descend in a furious rage, threatening vengeance and extermination to all who had dared to enter his domains without permission. With all these bravadoes the cacique, besides being infirm and exceedingly old, was pitiful in his dimensions; the most miserable little Indian that the Spaniards had seen in all their marchings. He was animated, however, by the remembrance of the deeds and exploits of his youth, for he had been a doughty warrior, and ruled over a vast province.

The women and attendants of the cacique surrounded him, and with tears and entreaties prevailed upon him not to descend; at the same time, those who came up from the village informed him that the enemy were men such as they had never before beheld or heard of, and that they came upon strange animals of great size and wonderful agility. "If you desire to battle with them," said they, "to avenge this injury, it will be better to sum-

mon together the warriors of the neighborhood and await a more fitting opportunity. In the mean time let us put on the semblance of friendship, and not, by any inconsiderate rashness, provoke our destruction." With these, and similar arguments, the women and attendants of the cacique prevented his sallying forth to battle. He continued, however, in great wrath, and when the governor sent him a message, offering peace, he returned an answer, refusing all amity, and breathing fiery vengeance.

De Soto and his followers, wearied out with the harassing warfare of the past winter, were very desirous of peace. Having pillaged the village and offended the cacique, they were in something of a dilemma; accordingly, they sent him many gentle and most soothing messages. Added to their disinclination for war, they observed, that during the three hours they had halted in the village, nearly four thousand well armed warriors had rallied round the cacique, and they feared, that if such a multitude could assemble in such a short time, there must be large reinforcements in reserve. They perceived, moreover, that the situation of the village was very advantageous for the Indians, and very unfavorable to them; for the plains around were covered with trees and intersected by numerous streams, which would impede the movements of the cavalry. But more than all this, they had learned from sad experience, that these incessant conflicts did not in the least profit them: day after day man and horse were slain, and in the midst of a hostile country, and far from home or hope of succor, their number was gradually dwindling away.

The Indians held a council to discuss the messages of the strangers. Many were for war; they were enraged with the imprisonment of their wives and children, and the pillage of their property; to recover which, according to their fierce notions, the

only recourse was arms. Others, who had not lost any thing, yet desired hostilities, from a natural inclination for fighting. They wished to exhibit their valor and prowess, and to try what kind of men these were, who carried such strange arms. The more pacific savages, however, advised that the proffered peace should be accepted, as the surest means of recovering their wives and children and effects; they added, that the enemy might burn their villages and lay waste their fields, at a time when their grain was almost ripening, and thus add to their calamities. The valor of these strangers, said they, is sufficiently evident; for men who have passed through so many enemies, cannot be otherwise than brave.

This latter counsel prevailed. The cacique, dissembling his anger, replied to the envoy, that since the Spaniards entreated for peace, he would grant it, and allow them to halt in the village, and give them food, on condition that they would immediately free his subjects and restore their effects; not keeping a single article. He also stipulated that they should not mount to see him. If these terms were accepted, he said, he would be friendly; if not, he defied them to the combat.

The Spaniards readily agreed to these conditions; the prisoners and plunder were restored, and the Indians departed from the village, leaving food in the dwellings for the Spaniards, who sojourned here six days to tend the sick. On the last day, with the permission of the cacique, De Soto visited him, and thanked him for his friendship and hospitality, and on the subsequent day they resumed their march.

CHAPTER LXV.

THE SPANIARDS PREPARE TO CROSS THE MISSISSIPPI—A CACIQUE, WITH A LARGE FLEET OF CANOES, COMES TO VISIT THE GOVERNOR: THE RESULT OF THEIR INTERVIEW—PASSAGE OF THE MISSISSIPPI—ARRIVAL AMONG THE KASKASKIAS INDIANS.

1541.

Departing from Chisca, the army travelled by slow journeys of three leagues a day, on account of the wounded and sick. They followed up the windings of the river until the fourth day, when they came to an opening in the thickets. Heretofore, they had been threading a vast and dense forest, bordering the stream, whose banks were so high on both sides, that they could neither descend nor clamber up them. De Soto found it necessary to halt in this plain twenty days, to build boats or piraguas to cross the river; for on the opposite bank a great multitude of Indian warriors were assembled, well armed, and with a fleet of canoes to defend the passage.

The morning after the governor had encamped, some of the natives visited him. Advancing, without speaking a word, and turning their faces to the east, they made a profound genuflection to the sun; then facing to the west, they made the same obeisance to the moon, and concluded with a similar, but less humble rever-

ence to De Soto. They said that they came in the name of the cacique of the province, and in the name of all his subjects, to bid them welcome, and to offer their friendship and services; and added, that they were desirous of seeing what kind of men these strangers were, as there was a tradition handed down from their ancestors, that a white people would come and conquer their country.* The Adelantado said many kind things in reply, and dismissed them, well pleased with their courteous reception.

The cacique sent him repeated messages of kindness, but never visited the encampment; excusing himself on account of ill health. His subjects aided the Spaniards with much cheerfulness; while the Indians from the opposite side of the river harassed them continually; crossing over in their canoes, and launching arrows at them, while at work. The archers and cross-bow men, however, as on a former occasion, concealed themselves in pits, until the enemy drew nigh, then suddenly rising and firing upon them, they scattered them with great slaughter.

One day, while at work, they perceived a fleet of two hundred canoes, descending the river. They were filled with armed Indians, painted after their wild fashion, adorned with feathers of every color, and carrying shields in their hands, made of the buffalo hide, wherewith some sheltered the rowers, while others stood in the prow and poop of the canoe with their bows and arrows. The canoes of the cacique and chief warriors were decorated with fanciful awnings, under which they sat and gave their orders to those who rowed. "It was a pleasing sight," says the Portuguese narrator, "to behold these wild savages in their canoes, which were neatly made and of great size, and, with their awnings, colored feathers and waving standards, appeared like a fleet of galleys."

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 22.

They paddled to within a stone's throw of the shore, where the governor was standing, surrounded by his officers. The cacique addressed him, and professed that he came to offer his services and assure him of his obedience, as he had been informed that he was the most powerful prince of the whole earth. De Soto returned him thanks, and begged him to land, that they might converse more, conveniently. The cacique returned no answer, but sent three canoes on shore with presents of fruit, and bread made of the pulp of a certain kind of plum.* The governor again importuned the savage to land, but perceiving him to hesitate, and suspecting a treacherous and hostile intent, marshalled his men in order of battle. Upon this, the Indians turned their prows and fled. The cross-bow men sent a flight of arrows after them, and killed five or six of their number. They retreated in good order, covering the rowers with their shields. Several times after this, they landed to attack the soldiers, as was supposed, but the moment the Spaniards charged upon them, they fled to their canoes.

At the end of twenty days, four piraguas were built and launched. About three hours before the dawn of day, De Soto ordered them to be manned, and four troopers of tried courage to go in each.

The rowers pulled strongly, and when they were within a stone's throw of the shore, the troopers dashed into the water, and meeting with no opposition from the enemy, they easily effected a landing, and made themselves masters of the pass. Two hours before the sun went down, the whole army had passed over the Mississippi.

* The Persimmon. Loaves are still made of this wild fruit among the Indians and settlers of the West.

The river in this place, says the Portuguese historian, was a half league from one shore to the other, so that a man standing still could scarce be discerned from the opposite shore. It was of great depth, of wonderful rapidity, and very muddy; and was always filled with floating trees and timber, carried down by the force of the current.*

Breaking up the boats as before, to preserve the nails, they proceeded onward four days, through a wilderness, intersected in many places by morasses which they were obliged to ford; and, on the fifth day, from the summit of a high ridge, they descried a large village, containing about four hundred dwellings. It was seated on the banks of a river, the borders of which, as far as the eye could reach, were covered with luxuriant fields of maze, interspersed with groves of fruit trees.† The natives, who had already received notice of their approach, thronged out in crowds to receive them, freely offering their houses and effects for their use.

Two Indian chiefs arrived in a short time, with a train of warriors, bearing a welcome from their cacique, and an offer of his services. The governor received them very courteously, and treated them with much kindness, so that they went away well pleased.

The Spaniards finding abundance of food for man and horse, halted for six days in the village, which bore the name of Casquin or Casqui, as did the whole province and its cacique.‡

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 22. This place, where De Soto and his army crossed the Mississippi, was probably the lowest Chickasaw Bluff, one of the ancient crossing places, between the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth parallel of latitude.

† Probably the river St. Francis.

‡ Supposed to be the same as the Kaskaskias Indians, who, at that time, peopled a province southwest of the Missouri. Vide Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 35, 250, 251. Charlevoix, Journal Historique, Vol. iii. let. 28.

Resuming their journey, they marched through a populous and champaign country, where the land was more elevated and the soil less alluvial than any they had yet seen on the borders of the Mississippi. The fields were overflowingly fruitful; the pecan nut, the red and gray plum, and mulberry trees, grew there in abundance.* In two days they came to the chief town, where the cacique resided. It was seated on the same side of the river, about seven leagues above, and in a very fertile and populous country. Here they were all received by the cacique, who made him a present of mantles,† skins, and fish; and invited De Soto to lodge in his habitation. It stood on a high artificial hill one side of the village, and consisted of twelve or thirteen large houses for the accommodation of his numerous family of women and attendants. The governor declined the invitation, for fear of incommoding him. A part of the army quartered in the houses, the remainder lodged in bowers, which the Indians quickly built of green branches, in groves close by. It was now the month of May, and as the weather was becoming oppressively warm, the tenants of these rustic bowers found them truly delightful.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 23. Supposed to be the country of the Little Prairie and that chain of high land extending to New Madrid; in the vicinity of which are to be seen many aboriginal remains. Vide Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 251.

† These mantles were fabricated from coarse threads of the bark of trees and nettles.

CHAPTER LXVI.

A RELIGIOUS CEREMONY ON THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

1541.

The army remained tranquil in this village during three days, with much good feeling on both sides. On the morning of the fourth the cacique, accompanied by all his principal subjects, came into the presence of De Soto, and making a profound obeisance, "Señor," said he, "as you are superior to us in prowess, and surpass us in arms, we likewise believe that your God is better than our God! These you behold before you, are the chief warriors of my dominions. We supplicate you to pray to your God to send us rain, for our fields are parched for the want of water!"*

De Soto replied, that although he and all his followers were but sinners, yet they would supplicate God, the father of mercies, to show mercy unto them. In the presence of the cacique, he then ordered his chief carpenter, Francisco the Genoese, to hew down the highest and largest pine tree in the vicinity, and construct of it a cross.

* The Portuguese narrator says, that the cacique besought him to restore to sight two blind men he had brought with him, and Biedma that the Indian chief begged him to leave behind him a cross, by supplicating which he might obtain help in his numerous wars.

They immediately felled one, of such immense size, that a hundred men could not raise it from the ground. They formed of it a perfect cross, and erected it on a high hill, on the banks of the river, which served the Indians as a watchtower, overlooking every eminence in the vicinity. Every thing was prepared in two days, and the governor ordered that the next morning all should join in a solemn procession to it, except an armed squadron of horse and foot, who should be on the alert, to protect the army.

The cacique walked beside the governor, and many of the savage warriors mingled among the Spaniards. Before them went a choir of priests and friars, chanting the litany, while the soldiers responded. The procession, in which were more than a thousand persons, both Spaniards and Indians, wound slowly and solemnly along, until it arrived before the cross, where all sank upon their knees. Two or three prayers were now offered up; they then arose, and, two by two, approached the holy emblem, bent the knee before it, and worshipped and kissed it.*

On the opposite shore of the river were collected fifteen or twenty thousand savages, of both sexes, and all ages, to witness this singular but imposing ceremony. With their arms extended, and their hands raised, they watched the movements of the Spaniards. Ever and anon they raised their eyes to heaven, and made signs with their faces and hands, as if asking of God to listen to the Christian prayer. Then would they raise a low and wailing cry, like people in excessive grief, echoed by the plaintive murmurings of their children's voices. De Soto and his followers were moved to tenderness, to behold, in a strange and heathen

* Biedma adds, that the Indians brought with them a quantity of reeds and walled the cross around.

land, a savage people, worshipping, with such deep humility and tears, the emblem of our redemption. Observing the same order, the procession returned; the priests chanted forth *Te Deum laudamus*, and with it closed the solemnities of the day.

God, in his mercy, says the Spanish chronicler, willing to show these heathens, that he listeneth unto those who call upon him in truth, sent down, in the middle of the ensuing night, a plenteous rain, to the great joy of the Indians.*

The cacique, with his warriors, astonished and overjoyed at this unhoped for blessing, formed a procession, in imitation of the Christians, and repaired to De Soto to express his gratitude for the kindness his God had shown them through his intercession. The governor answered them, that they must give thanks to God who created the heavens and earth, and was the bestower of these and other far greater mercies.

It is a reflection, replete with interest, that nearly three centuries ago, the cross, the type of our beautiful religion, was planted on the banks of the Mississippi, and its silent forests were awakened by the Christian's hymn of gratitude and praise. The effect was vivid but transitory. The "voice cried in the wilderness," and reached and was answered by every heart, but it died away, and was forgotten, and was not to be heard again in that savage region, for many generations. It was as if a lightning gleam had broken for a moment upon a benighted world, startling it with sudden effulgence, only to leave it in tenfold gloom. The real dawning was yet afar off from the benighted valley of the Mississippi.

* Las Casas, Lib. iv. c. 6.

CHAPTER LXVII.

EXPEDITION AGAINST THE CACIQUE CAPAHA—HIS VILLAGE IS SACKED —FORTIFIES HIMSELF IN AN ISLAND, WHERE HE IS AGAIN ASSAILED—THE SPANIARDS DESERTED BY THEIR ALLIES, THE CASQUINS.

1541.

As the army had been already quartered nine or ten days in this village, De Soto gave orders for them to prepare to march the following morning. The cacique, who was about fifty years of age, obtained permission of the governor to go with him, with a train of his warriors and domestics; the one to escort the army, the other to carry his supplies, as they had to traverse a wilderness, and also to clear the road, gather wood for the encampment, and fodder for the horses. The true object of the cacique, however, was to avail himself of the presence of the Spaniards to wreak vengeance on a neighboring chieftain called Capaha.* A war had existed between the tribes for several generations; but the present cacique of Capaha had gained the ascendency, and kept Casquin in continual awe and subjection, by the superiority of his forces.

In the morning, the cacique Casquin took the field, to escort the governor. He had three thousand Indians laden with sup-

* In the Portuguese Narration, and in Biedma, the name of this cacique is spelt Pacaha.

plies, and with the baggage of the army, who were all armed with bows and arrows. But beside these, he had five thousand of his choicest warriors, well armed, fiercely painted, and decorated with their war plumes. With these he secretly meditated a signal ravage.

With permission of the governor, he took the lead, under pretence of clearing the road of any lurking foe, and preparing every thing for the encampment of the Spaniards. He divided his men into squadrons, and marched, in good military array, a quarter of a league in advance. By night he posted sentinels in the same manner as the Spaniards.

In this way they travelled for three days, at the end of which they came to a great swamp, miry on the borders, with a lake in the centre, too deep to be forded, and which formed a kind of gulf on the Mississippi, into which it emptied itself.* Across this piece of water the Indians of Casquin constructed a rude bridge, of trunks of trees laid upon posts driven into the bottom of the lake, with a row of stakes above the bridge, for those who crossed to hold by. The horses were obliged to swim, and were got across with great difficulty, on account of the deep mire. This swamp separated the two hostile provinces of Casquin and Capaha. The Spaniards were nearly the whole day in crossing it, and encamped in beautiful meadows about half a league beyond.

After travelling two days more, they came early on the third day to some elevated ridges, from whence they descried the principal town of Capaha, the frontier post and defence of the province.†

It contained five hundred large houses, and was situated on

* Inca, Lib. iv. c. 7. Portuguese Relation, c. 23.

† This was the northernmost point reached by De Soto on the Mississippi.

a high ground which commanded the surrounding country. It was nearly encircled by a deep moat, fifty paces in breadth; and where the moat did not extend, was defended by a strong wall of timber and plaster, such as has already been described. The moat was filled with water by a canal, cut from the Mississippi, which was three leagues distant. The canal was deep, and sufficiently wide for two canoes to pass abreast, without touching each other's paddles. This canal and moat were filled with fish, so as to supply all the wants of the village and army, without any apparent diminution of their number.

Capaha had received intelligence by his scouts of the formidable allies who accompanied his old antagonist, Casquin. His own warriors were dispersed, and not sufficient in number to resist such additional force. As soon, therefore, as he saw the enemy approaching, he sprang into a canoe in the moat, and passing along the canal into the Grand River, took refuge in a strong island. Such of his people as had canoes followed him, others fled into the neighboring woods, while some lingered in the village.

Casquin, marching, as usual, in the advance, arrived with his warriors at the village some time before the Spaniards. Meeting with no resistance, he entered it warily, suspecting some ambush. This gave time for many of the loiterers to escape.

As soon as Casquin ascertained that the village lay at his mercy, he gave full vent to his hatred and vengeance. His warriors scoured the place, killed and scalped all the men they met, to the number of a hundred and fifty; sacked and plundered the houses, and made captives of many boys, women, and children. Among the captives were two of the numerous wives of Capaha; they were young and beautiful, and had been prevented from

embarking with the cacique, by the confusion and alarm occasioned by the approach of the enemy.

The hostility of Casquin and his warriors was not confined to the living, but extended to the dead. They broke into the grand sepulchre or mausoleum, in the public square, which the Indians hold so sacred. Here were deposited the remains of the ancestors of the cacique, and of the great men of his tribe, and here were treasured up the trophies gained over the people of Casquin in many a past battle. These trophies they tore down from the walls, and stripped the sepulchre of all its ornaments and treasures. They then threw down the wooden coffins, in which were the remains of the dead, trampled upon the bodies, scattered about the bones, and wreaked upon them all kinds of insults and indignities, in revenge for past injuries, which the deceased had inflicted upon their tribe. At the entrance of the sepulchre were the heads of many of their warriors, who had been slain in former battles, and which were here stuck on the ends of pikes as warlike trophies. These they took down, and bore away with them, replacing them with the heads of the enemies they had massacred. They would have completed their triumph by setting fire to the sepulchre and the whole village, but were restrained by a fear of offending the governor. All these outrages were perpetrated before the Spaniards had reached the place.

De Soto was much concerned at this ravage of his allies. He immediately sent envoys to Capaha, to the island on which he had fortified himself, with proffers of friendship. They were indignantly rejected; and the governor learnt that the cacique was summoning all his warriors, and breathing vengeance.

Finding every effort to conciliate the chieftain fruitless, the governor determined to attack him in his stronghold. Casquin

provided above seventy canoes for the purpose; and an invasion of the island was made by two hundred Spaniards and three thousand Indians.

The island was covered with a dense forest of trees and underwood, and the cacique had fortified himself strongly with barricades. The Spaniards effected a landing with great difficulty; gained the first barrier by hard fighting, and pressed on to the second, within which the women and children were sheltered. Here the warriors of Capaha fought with redoubled fury, and struck such dismay into the people of Casquin, that they abandoned their Spanish allies and fled to their canoes; nay, they would have carried off the canoes of the Spaniards also, had there not been a couple of soldiers in each, to guard them.

The Spaniards, thus deserted by their pusillanimous allies, and being overpowered by numbers, began to retreat in good order to their canoes. They would all, however, have been cut off, had not Capaha restrained the fury of his warriors, and suffered them to regain the shore and embark unmolested.

This unexpected forbearance on the part of the savage chieftain surprised the Adelantado. On the following day four principal warriors arrived on an embassy from Capaha. They came with great ceremony; bowed to the sun, the moon, and the governor; but took no notice of Casquin, who was present, treating him with utter contempt and disdain. In the name of their cacique, they prayed oblivion of the past, and amity for the future, and declared that their chieftain was ready to come in person and do homage. The general received them with the utmost affability, assured them of his friendship, and sent them away well pleased with their reception.

Casquin was vexed at this negotiation, and would fain have

prolonged the hostilities between the Spaniards and his ancient enemies; but the governor was as much charmed with the frankness and magnanimity of one cacique, as he had been displeased with the craft and cruelty of the other. He issued orders, forbidding any one to injure the natives of the province or their possessions.

In order to appease the governor for the dastardly flight of his warriors, Casquin made him presents of fish, together with mantles and skins of various kinds; and, moreover, brought him one of his daughters as a handmaid. De Soto, however, was not thoroughly to be reconciled. He permitted the cacique to remain with him, and to retain about him a sufficient number of vassals for his personal service, but obliged him to send home all his warriors.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. iv. c. 7, 8, 9. Portuguese Narrative, c. 24.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE CACIQUE CAPAHA AND DE SOTO.—HIS TWO BEAUTIFUL WIVES, AND THEIR FATE.

1541.

On the following morning Capaha came to the governor, at the village, attended by a train of a hundred warriors, decorated with beautiful plumes, and with mantles of all kinds of skins. He was about twenty-six years old, of noble person and fine demeanor. On entering the village, his first care, before waiting on the governor, was to visit the sepulchre of his ancestors. The indignities that had been offered to their remains are such as an Indian feels most acutely. The cacique, however, concealed the grief and rage that burnt within his bosom. Gathering up the scattered bones in silence, he kissed them, and returned them reverently to the coffins; and having arranged the sepulchre, as well as circumstances would permit, proceeded to the quarters of the governor.

De Soto came forth to receive him, accompanied by Casquin. The cacique paid his homage to the governor, offering himself as his vassal; but he took no more notice of his old adversary, Casquin, than if he had not been present. The governor embraced Capaha as a friend, and he was honorably treated by all the officers. The cacique answered to numerous questions concerning

his territories, with great clearness and intelligence. When the governor had ceased his interrogatories, and there was a pause, Capaha could no longer restrain his smothered indignation. Turning suddenly to his rival cacique, "Doubtless, Casquin," said he, "you exult in having revenged your past defeats: a thing you could never have hoped or effected through your own forces. You may thank these strangers for it. They will go, but we shall remain in our own country as we were before. Pray to the sun and moon to send us good weather, then!"

The governor interposed, and endeavored to produce a thorough reconciliation between the caciques. In deference to him, Capaha repressed his wrath, and embraced his adversary; but there were occasional glances between them that portended a future storm, and the proud Capaha was constantly on the alert on all points of ceremony and precedence, and made Casquin give way to his superior pretensions.

The governor and the two caciques partook of a repast together, after which the two young and beautiful wives of Capaha, who had been captured, were brought to be restored to him. He received them with many acknowledgments of the generosity thus shown towards him, and then offered them as presents to the governor. On De Soto's declining them, he begged him to accept them and give them to some of his officers or soldiers, or to whom he pleased, as they could not be admitted again into his household, nor remain in his territories. The governor, seeing that he contemned them, and considered them as dishonored, was persuaded to receive them under his protection; knowing the laws and customs of these savages to be cruel in the extreme, when the chastity of their wives was concerned.*

* The Portuguese historian says, that these beautiful females were the

In the town of Capaha, the Spaniards found a great variety of skins of deer, panthers, bears, and wild cats. Of these they made garments, of which they stood in great need, many of them being nearly naked. They made moccasons of deer-skins, and used the bear-skins as cloaks. They found Indian bucklers formed of buffalo hides, which the troops took possession of.

While quartered in the village, they were abundantly supplied with fish, taken from the adjacent moat, which formed a kind of wier, into which incredible numbers entered from the Mississippi. Among these was a kind called bagres, the head of which was one-third of its bulk, and about its fins and along its sides, it had bones as sharp as needles. Some of these caught in the Mississippi weighed from a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds weight.* There was another fish, also, of a curious shape, having a snout a cubit in length, the upper lip like a spade or peel:† neither of these two species of fish had scales. The Indians likewise brought a fish occasionally, as large as a hog, which had several rows of teeth above and below.

sisters of the cacique Capaha, and that he begged De Soto to accept them and marry them, as pledges of his affection. The one, he added, was called Macanoche, and the other Mochifa; both handsome and well shaped; especially the former, whose features were beautiful, her countenance pleasing, and her air majestic. We have followed the account of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega.

* The cat-fish.

† This spade or palat-fish is at present so rare as scarcely to be met with; but seems to have been peculiar to this region.—Vide Flint's Geography of the Mississippi, Vol. i. p. 128 and 129; Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 254

CHAPTER LXIX.

TWO SOLDIERS DISPATCHED IN SEARCH OF SALT AND GOLD, AND THE ACCOUNT THEY BROUGHT BACK—THE SPANIARDS ARRIVE AT QUIGUATE—JUAN GAYTAN REFUSES TO PERFORM HIS DUTY, AND WHAT DE SOTO DID THEREUPON.

1541.

WHILE in the territory of Capaha, the governor gathered intelligence from the Indians, that at about forty leagues distance, among certain ranges of hills, there was much salt and also much of a yellowish metal. As the army was suffering for the want of salt, and still retained their eagerness for gold, De Soto dispatched two trusty and intelligent men, named Hernando de Silvera and Pedro Moreno, accompanied by Indian guides, to visit this region. At the end of eleven days they returned, quite spent and half famished, having eaten nothing but green plums and green maize, which they found in some squalid wigwams; six of their Indian companions were laden with rock-salt in natural crystals, and one with copper. The country through which they had passed was sterile and thinly peopled, and the Indians informed the governor that still further to the north, the country was almost uninhabited on account of the cold. The buffalo roamed there in such numbers that the natives could not cultivate fields of maize; they

subsisted, therefore, by the chase, and principally on the flesh of these wild animals.*

Hearing this unfavorable account of the country, and that there was no gold in that direction, De Soto returned with his army to the village of Casquin, to strike from thence westward; for hitherto, ever since leaving Mauvila, he had kept northward, to avoid the sea.† After sojourning five days in the village of Casquin, he proceeded four days down along the bank of the river, through a fertile and populous country, until he came to the province of Quiguate, where he was well received. Keeping down the river for five days longer, he came, on the fourth of August, to the chief village of the province, called by the same name. Here he took up his quarters during six days, in the house of the cacique.

One night while lodged here, the governor was informed at midnight, that the treasurer, Juan Gaytan, who was allotted to the patrol at four in the morning, refused to perform his duty, giving his official station as an excuse. De Soto waxed wroth at this; for this cavalier was one of those who had murmured at Mauvila, and had said that he would return to Spain or Mexico, as soon as they reached the ships.

Leaving his bed, and sallying forth on the terrace before the house of the cacique, which overlooked the village, the governor raised his voice until it resounded through the place. "What is this, soldiers and captains?" cried he. "Do the mutineers still live, who, when in Mauvila, talked of returning to Spain or Mexico? and do they now, with the excuse of being officers of the royal revenue, refuse to patrol the four hours that fall to their

* Portuguese Relation, c. 24. † Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. iv. c. 11.

share? Why do you desire to return to Spain?—have you left any hereditary estates that you wish to enjoy? Why do you wish to go to Mexico?—to prove the baseness and pusillanimity of your spirits? That, having it in your power to become chieftains in a vast and noble country you had discovered, you preferred living dependents in a stranger's house, and guests at a stranger's table, rather than maintain house and table of your own! What honor will this confer upon you? Shame—shame on you! blush for yourselves, and recollect that, officers of the royal treasury or not, you must all serve your sovereign! Presume not upon any rank you may possess; for, be he who he may, I will take off the head of that man who refuses to do his duty. And, to undeceive you, know that whilst I live, no one shall leave this country until we have conquered and settled it.

These words, uttered in a great rage, showed the cause of that moody melancholy which the governor had manifested ever since he left Mauvila. This outbreak had a visible effect upon the soldiery. They saw that their general was not to be trifled with, and they thenceforth obeyed his orders without murmuring.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE SPANIARDS ARRIVE AT COLIGOA—PASS THROUGH THE PROVINCE OF PALISEMA, INTO THE COUNTRY OF THE TUNICAS—THE MANNER IN WHICH THE NATIVES MADE SALT—ENTER THE PROVINCE OF TULA—ATTACK UPON AN INDIAN VILLAGE—STRUGGLE BETWEEN A SOLDIER AND FIVE WOMEN.

1541.

From Quiguate, De Soto shaped his course to the northwest, in search of a province called Coligoa, lying at the foot of mountains, beyond which he thought there might be a gold region. He was guided by a single Indian, who led the army for several days through dreary forests and frequent marshes, until they came to the village of Coligoa, on the margin of a small river. The natives, not being apprized of the coming of the Spaniards, threw themselves into the river on their approach, and fled. The troopers pursued them, and took a number of prisoners of both sexes. In a few days the cacique came to wait upon De Soto, bringing him a present of mantles, deer-skins, and hides of the bison or buffalo, and informed him that about six leagues to the northward, was a thinly peopled country, where vast herds of these wild buffalo ranged;* but that to the southward, there was a populous and plentiful province, called Cayas.

* This province is supposed to have been situated towards the sources of the St. Francis, or the hills of White River.—Vide Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 256

The cacique of Coligoa furnishing the Spaniards with a guide, they resumed their march, striking towards the south, and after a journey of five days, entered the province of Palisema. The cacique had fled, but had left his dwelling furnished and arranged in order for De Soto. The walls were hung with deer-skins, so admirably dyed and dressed, that they appeared to the eye like beautiful tapestry. The floor was likewise covered with similar fine skins.*

They made but a short halt in this province, as the supply of maize was scanty, and, pushing onward rapidly, in four days crossed the frontiers of the province of Cayas, and encamped on the banks of a river near a village called Tanico.†

The waters of this river, and of an adjacent lake, were impregnated with salt; so much so, as to leave a deposit in the blue sand which bordered their shores. The Indians were accustomed to collect this sand in baskets, wide above and narrow below, which were suspended in the air on a pole. Water was then poured upon the sand, and draining through it, fell into a vessel beneath, carrying with it the saline particles. The water was then evaporated by boiling, so as to leave the crystallized salt in the bottom of the pot. This the Indians used as an article of traffic, exchanging it with their neighbors for skins and mantles.

The Spaniards were overjoyed at finding an article of which they were so much in need; they remained eight days making salt, and several who had suffered excessively for the want of it, indulged in it so immoderately as to bring on maladies, and in some instances death.

* Portuguese Relation, c. 25.

† Supposed to have belonged to the tribe of the Tunicas—Vide Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 257.

Having laid in a large supply of salt, they pursued their journey, and arriving at the province of Tula, marched four days through a wilderness, when they halted about midday in a beautiful plain, within half a league of the principal village. In the afternoon, the governor set out with a strong party of horse and foot, to reconnoitre the village. It was seated in a plain betwixt two streams. On their approach, the inhabitants seized their arms and sallied bravely forth, the women rushing to combat as fiercely as the men.

The Spaniards soon drove them back, and entered the village fighting. The savages fought from house top to house top, disdaining to ask for quarter, and struggling desperately to the death. During the conflict, a soldier entered one of the houses and escaped to an upper chamber, which was used as a granary, where he found five women hid in one corner. He made signs to them not to be alarmed, as he did not wish to injure them: his caution was unnecessary, for they flew on him like so many mastiffs upon a bull. In his struggle to shake them off, he thrust his leg, unto the very thigh, through the slight floor of reeds, so that he remained seated on the floor, at the mercy of those furies, who, with biting and blows, were in a fair way of killing him. Notwithstanding the strait he was in, the sturdy soldier was ashamed to call for succor, because his antagonists were women.

At this moment, another soldier happened to enter below, and seeing a naked leg dangling through the ceiling, at first thought it the limb of an Indian, and raised his sword to give it a sweeping blow, when, observing it more narrowly, and hearing the clamor over head, he suspected the truth of the matter, and calling two of his companions, they ascended to the rescue of

their comrade; so fierce, however, was the fury of the women, that not one of them would quit her hold upon the soldier, until they were all slain.

At a late hour the governor drew off his men from the village, and returned to the camp; vexed at having been drawn into so unprofitable a battle, wherein so many of his followers were badly wounded.*

* Portuguese Relation, c. 25, 26. Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. iv. c. 1x.

CHAPTER LXXI.

WHAT THE SPANIARDS FOUND IN THE VILLAGE OF TULA—THE TRIBE OF TULA DIFFERED FROM ANY INDIANS THEY HAD SEEN—THEY FALL SUDDENLY UPON THE ENCAMPMENT AT NIGHT—THE PROWESS OF AN INDIAN, AND HIS FATE.

1541.

On the following day, the army entered the village, and found it abandoned. In the after part of the day, bands of horse scoured the country in every direction. They met several of the natives, but it was impossible to bring them in alive, or obtain any information from them. They threw themselves upon the ground, crying "Kill me or leave me!" nor could the death of some conquer the obstinacy of the rest.

In this village, the Spaniards found the flesh of buffaloes and numerous skins of the same animal; some in their raw state, others dressed for robes and blankets. They sought in vain, however, to meet with the buffalo alive, but still learnt that they existed in great herds to the northward. The natives of the province of Tula differed from all the Indians they had yet seen. The others were handsome and well-formed, but these, both men and women, were extremely ill-favored Their heads were incredibly large, and narrow at the top; a shape produced by being

compressed by bandages, from their birth until they were nine or ten years of age. Their faces, particularly their lips, inside and out, were hideously tattooed; and their dispositions were in unison with their dreadful aspects.

On the fourth night that the Spaniards were in the village, the Indians came in great numbers, and so silently, that before the sentinels perceived them, they burst upon the encampment in three different parts. Loud were the shouts, and great the confusion; for, in the obscurity of the night, it was impossible to distinguish friends from foes. The Spaniards shouted the names of the Virgin and Santiago, to prevent their wounding one another. The savages, likewise, shouted the name of Tula. Many of them, instead of bows and arrows, had staves like pikes, two or three yards in length, which were new to the soldiers, and with which they gave very severe blows.

Thus stubbornly they fought for more than an hour, and they did not retreat to the woods until day began to dawn. The Spaniards did not pursue them, but returned to the village to take care of the wounded, of which there were many, although there were only four killed.

After the battle, several of the Spaniards, as usual, were scattered about the field examining the dead. Three foot soldiers and two on horseback were thus employed, when one of the former saw an Indian raise his head from among the bushes and immediately conceal it again. He gave the cry of Indians! Indians! The two men on horseback, thinking some of the enemy were coming in force, galloped off in different directions to meet them. In the mean time, the foot soldier who had discovered the Indian among the bushes, ran up to kill him.

The savage, seeing he could not escape, stepped forth manfully to the encounter, armed with a Spanish battle-axe, which he had gained that morning in the village. Taking it in both hands, he struck the shield of the soldier, severed it in two, and badly wounded his arm. The pain of the wound was so great and the blow so violent, that the Spaniard had not strength to attack his foe. The Indian then rushed upon the other soldier who was coming up, struck his shield in the same manner, broke it in twain, wounded him likewise in the arm, and disabled him. One of those on horse seeing his companions so roughly handled, charged upon the Indian, who took shelter under an oak tree. The Spaniard, not being able to ride under the tree, drew near, and made several powerful thrusts at the Indian, but could not reach him. The savage rushed out, brandished the battle-axe with both hands, struck the horse across the shoulder, and laid it open from the withers to the knees, so as to deprive him of the power of moving.

At this moment, Gonzalo Silvestre, who was on foot, came up. He had been in no haste, deeming two foot soldiers and three horsemen sufficient to manage one Indian. The latter, elated by his success, advanced to receive him with great boldness. Grasping the battle-axe in both hands, he gave a blow similar to the two first; but Silvestre was more guarded than his companions. The weapon glanced over the shield and stuck in the ground. Silvestre, having the savage at advantage, gave him a diagonal blow with his sword, which laid open his face and breast, and entering his arm, nearly severed the wrist. The infidel, seizing the axe between the stump and his other hand, with a desperate leap, made an attempt to wound the Spaniard in the face; but Silves-

tre, again warding off the blow with his shield, gave him a sweeping cut across the waist, that passed through his naked body, and he fell dead, cut completely asunder.*

* The Inca says that the blow was so powerful, and the sword so keen, that the Indian remained for a few seconds standing on his feet, and saying to the Spaniard, "Peace be with you," (quedate en pas,) fell dead in two halves! The feat, as told in the text, is sufficiently strong for belief

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE ARMY ARRIVES AT UTIANGUE—THE GOVERNOR DETERMINES TO WINTER THERE—PREPARATIONS ACCORDINGLY—DEATH OF JUAN ORTIZ, THE INTERPRETER.

1541.

The Spaniards sojourned in the village of Tula twenty days, curing the wounded. During this time, they made many incursions in different parts of the province. They found it very populous; but, although they captured many of the inhabitants, it was impossible, either by presents or menaces, to acquire their friendship, or to bring them into obedience. So extreme was the ferocity of this tribe, that they were the dread of all their neighbors, who used the name of Tula as an object of nursery terror to their unruly children.

The army continued their march in quest of the province called Utiangue, or Autiamque; about ten days' journey, or eighty leagues from Tula; near which, the Indians said, there was a large lake, which the Spaniards hoped might prove an arm of the sea. Five days of their journey was over a rough, mountainous country, closely wooded, where they found a village called Quipana;* but could take none of the inhabitants, the forests impeding the speed of their horses.

* Supposed to be in the country of the Kappaws, or Quapaws.

After a further march of a few days they entered the province of Utiangue. It was very fertile, with a scattered but warlike population. They were harassed incessantly by ambuscades and skirmishes, but kept steadfastly on, until they reached the village of Utiangue, from which the province took its name. It contained numerous well built houses, and was situated in a fine plain, watered by a wide running river, the same that passed through the province of Cayas.* It was bordered by meadows that afforded excellent pasturage for the horses. The town was abandoned by its inhabitants, excepting a few lingerers whom they made prisoners. The houses were well stocked with maize, small beans, nuts, and plums.

As the season was far advanced, De Soto determined to winter here. He encamped in the centre of the village, but apart from the houses, lest the Indians should set fire to them in the night. He then set to work to fortify the place. The ground that was to be inclosed was measured out, and a portion assigned to each, according to the number of slaves he owned. Thus every one had his task, and worked with emulation, the Indians bringing the wood; and in three days the village was surrounded by strong palisades, driven deep into the ground, and fastened by thwart pieces.

In addition to the ample supply of provisions found in the village, the Spaniards foraged the surrounding country, which was very fertile, and brought in abundance of maize, dried fruits, and various kinds of grain. They were extremely successful, also, in the chase; killing great quantities of venison. The province, moreover, abounded, to an unusual degree, with rabbits, of which they found two species; one of the usual size, the other as large

* Supposed to be the Arkansas.

and strong as a hare, and much fatter. These the Indians were accustomed to snare with running nooses.

The cacique of the province sent messengers from time to time, with presents, and promises of friendly service, but never made his appearance. His messengers, also, always came at night; and, after delivering their message loitered about the camp, noticing the men, horses, and weapons, until it became evident they only came as spies. The governor, therefore, gave orders that no Indian messenger should be admitted at night; and one, persisting to enter, was killed by a sentinel; which put an end to all embassies of the kind.

The Spaniards, however, were often waylaid and assaulted, when out on foraging or hunting parties, but gave good account of their assailants.

The winter was severe, with great falls of snow. At one time the Spaniards were blocked up for upwards of a month, until at last firewood began to fail them. Upon this, De Soto turned out with all the horse, and, by riding backward and forward, made a track from the camp to a forest, about two bow-shots distant. This enabled the men to go thither and cut fuel.*

Upon the whole, though the weather was severe, yet, having good quarters, and fuel and food in abundance, the Spaniards passed the pleasantest winter they had experienced in the course of their expedition; and enjoyed their present ease, and comfort, and abundance, with the greater zest, from the frightful hardships and disasters they had experienced.

During their residence in this village, Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, died. His death was a severe loss to the service; as he had, throughout the expedition, served as the main organ of

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 27.

communication between the Spaniards and the natives. It is true, that, even with his assistance, these communications were extremely imperfect, and subject to many errors and misinterpretations. Juan Ortiz was acquainted merely with the language of the Indians in the neighborhood of Espiritu Santo; whereas, in the march of the army, they were continually passing through new provinces, with each its particular tongue. It was necessary, therefore, to have an Indian from almost every tribe, as an interpreter; which rendered their mode of communication awkward in the extreme.

In treating with a cacique, the word given by the governor to Juan Ortiz, was passed from mouth to mouth of perhaps eight or ten Indians, of different tribes, before it reached the person to be addressed; and the reply was transmitted in the same tedious method to the governor. Information, also, concerning any new region or any distant place, had to be collected in the same manner; subject to perversions and misunderstandings in the course of its transmission.

Hence arose continual errors among the Spaniards, as to the country and its inhabitants, which often bewildered them in their wanderings, and doubtless led to many sanguinary affairs with the natives, which a proper understanding of each other might have prevented.

The death of Juan Ortiz increased these disadvantages tenfold. Henceforth they had no other interpreter, through whom to communicate in the first instance with the natives, but the young Indian brought from Cofachiqui. He, however, had acquired but an imperfect knowledge of the Spanish language, and was deficient in the sagacity, the general information, and varied experience which had distinguished Juan Ortiz

CHAPTER LXXIII.

CHANGE IN THE VIEWS AND PLANS OF DE SOTO—HE TURNS HIS STEPS TOWARDS THE MISSISSIPPI—A SOLDIER DROWNED IN ATTEMPTING TO CROSS A LAKE—THE SPANIARDS PASS THROUGH THE PROVINCE OF ANILCO—HOSTILE BEARING OF THE CACIQUE—ARRIVAL AT GUACHOYA.

1542.

The feelings and views of Hernando De Soto had recently undergone a change. The anger which had induced him so suddenly to alter his plans at Mauvila, and turn his back abruptly on the sea, had gradually subsided. His hopes of finding a golden region were fast fading away. He had lost nearly half of his troops by fighting and by sickness, and by hardships of various kinds; the greater part of his horses, too, had been slain or had perished; of the residue, many were lame, and all had been without shoes for above a year, for want of iron. He was daily more and more sensible also, of the loss he had sustained in the death of Juan Ortiz. The young Indian of Cofachiqui, who succeeded him as interpreter, made continual blunders as to the accounts of the country, the rivers, routes, and distances, and there was danger, through his misinformation, that the army might be led into difficulties, and become perplexed and lost in the vast and trackless wilderness they had to traverse.

Bitterly now did De Soto repent his having abandoned his original plan of joining his ships, and founding a settlement in the Bay of Achusi. He was too far from the sea to attempt reaching it now by a direct march; but he resolved to give over his wandering in the interior, and make the best of his way to the Mississippi. Here he would choose some suitable village on its banks for a fortified post; establish himself there; build two brigantines, in which some of his most confidential followers might descend the river, carry tidings of his safety to his wife and friends in Cuba, and procure reinforcements of men and horses, together with flocks, herds, seeds, and every thing else necessary to colonize and secure the possession of the vast and fertile country he had overrun.*

As soon as the spring was sufficiently advanced, therefore, De Soto broke up his winter cantonment at Utiangue, and set out in a direction for the Rio Grande, or Mississippi. He had received intelligence of a village called Anilco, situated on a great river which emptied into the Mississippi; and towards that village he shaped his course.

After leaving Utiangue, he sojourned for ten days in the province of Ayas, at a village situated on the same river which passed by Cayas and Utiangue.† In this time, a boat was constructed, in which they all passed the river, but were detained four days on its banks by snow and bad weather. They then journeyed for three days through a low country, cut up by ravines, and perplexed with swamps. It was toilsome marching for the foot-soldiers. As to the troopers, they were always to

* Portuguese Relation, c. 28. Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. v. p. i. c. 3.

† Supposed to be the Arkansas.

the stirrup, sometimes to the knees, in water, and now and then they were obliged to swim their horses.

At a town called Tultelpina, they were checked in their march by a lake, which emptied itself into a river. The waters were high and turbulent. De Soto ordered one of his captains to embark in a canoe with five men, and cross the lake. The impetuous current overturned the frail bark: some men clung to it, others to the trees that were standing in the water; but one, Francisco Bastian, a Spaniard of rank, was unfortunately drowned. De Soto then sought to find a route along the borders of the lake, but in vain. At length, at the suggestion of two Indians of Tultelpina, he caused light rafts to be made of reeds, and the wood work of the houses, and in this way transported the army across.*

Urging their way forward, the Spaniards now reached the province of Anilco, and penetrated about thirty leagues, passing several villages, until they reached the principal one, which gave its name to the province. It was situated in a champaign country, on the banks of a river, and contained about four hundred spacious houses, built round a square. The residence of the cacique, as usual, was posted on a high artificial mound. The country was so well peopled, that there were several other villages in sight, and there was such abundance of maize, of fruits, and pulse, of various kinds, that the Spaniards pronounced it the most fertile and populous country they had met with, excepting Coza and Apalachee.

On the approach of the Spaniards, the inhabitants made some show of resistance, and skirmished slightly; but it was only to cover the retreat of their wives and children across the river, on rafts and canoes. Some few were taken before they could embark

* Portuguese Relation, c. 28.

Many more were found in the village, who had not been able to escape.

Soon after the governor had taken up his quarters in the village, an Indian of distinction, attended by a few others, came to him, in the name of the cacique, with a present of a mantle of martin skins and a string of large pearls. De Soto gave the principal Indian of the embassy a collar of mother of pearl, and some other trinkets, with which he went away apparently well satisfied. The negotiation, which opened thus favorably, ended in nothing; and the ambassadors proved to have been mere spies, sent to observe the force of the strangers. The cacique could not be induced to enter into friendly intercourse, treating all messengers sent to him with great haughtiness, and giving various signs of determined hostility.

The river that ran by the village of Anilco was the same that passed by Cayas and Utiangue; and De Soto was informed, that at no great distance it emptied itself into the Mississippi.* Near to the confluence of the two streams, he was told, there was situated on the banks of the Mississippi a large village, called Guachoya, the capital of a populous and fruitful province of the same name, the cacique of which was continually at war with the chief of Anilco.

De Soto determined to proceed to this province, in hopes that the sea might lie at no great distance from it. At any rate, the village of Guachoya might prove an advantageous site for the building of his brigantines, and the cantonment of his troops. As soon, therefore, as canoes could be procured, and rafts constructed, to cross the river opposite the village of Anilco, the army resumed its march, over a hilly, uninhabited country, and in four

* The river is supposed to be the Arkansas.

days arrived at the village of Guachoya. It contained about three hundred houses, and was situated about a bow-shot from the Mississippi, on two contiguous hills, with a small intervening plain, that served as a public square. The whole was fortified by palisades. The inhabitants had fled across the Mississippi in their canoes, taking with them most of their effects; but Juan de Añasco foraged the neighborhood, and brought in a great supply of maize, beans, dried fruits, and cakes made of pressed plums or persimmons.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

MEETING BETWEEN DE SOTO AND THE CACIQUE GUACHOYA—ANASCO DISPATCHED TO SEEK FOR THE SEA—EXPEDITION BY LAND AND WATER AGAINST THE CHIEFTAIN ANILCO, AND THE RESULT.

1542.

De Soto took up his quarters in the house of the cacique, which was spacious, and situated on the summit of one of the hills. Four days were passed in messages between him and the cacique, who was extremely distrustful of the Spaniards. At length the apprehensions of the chieftain were removed, and on the fifth day he visited the army. He came with a retinue of a hundred warriors, decked out in savage finery, and bringing presents of mantles and deer-skins, together with fish and dogs.

The governor received Guachoya very courteously at the door of his mansion, and conducted him into the great saloon, or hall of the building. The attendants of the cacique ranged themselves round the apartment among the Spaniards, while their chief and the governor held a long conversation, through the medium of interpreters, concerning the province and the surrounding territories.

In the midst of the conversation, the cacique happened to sneeze. Upon this, all his attendants bowed their heads, opened

and closed their arms, and making other signs of veneration, saluted the cacique with various phrases of the same purport—May the sun guard you—may the sun be with you—may the sun shine upon you—defend you—prosper you, and the like; each one uttered the phrase that came first to mind, and for a short time there was a universal murmuring of these compliments.*

The Spaniards were surprised to observe among these rude savages the same kind of ceremonials which were used on this simple occasion by the most polished natives of Europe; and the governor turning to his officers, said, smilingly, "You see the world is every where the same"

The cacique ate at the governor's table. His Indians remained in attendance, and would not go to their own repast until he had finished, although repeatedly invited. They then dined in the quarters, where a general repast was provided. The cacique lodged in a part of his own dwelling, with a few of his own attendants; his warriors, at sunset, crossing to the opposite side of the river and returning in the morning. This they continued to do while the Spaniards remained in the village.

One of the first questions that De Soto had asked of the cacique was, whether he knew any thing of the sea. Guachoya, however, professed utter ignorance of any such great body of water; his knowledge of the country down to the river, did not extend beyond a great province called Quigualtanqui; the cacique whereof, he said, was the greatest chieftain in all these parts.

The governor suspected his ignorance to be feigned, and accordingly dispatched Juan de Añasco, with eight troopers, to explore the course of the river, and ascertain whether the sea was near. De Añasco returned after eight days' absence, in all which

* Garcilaso de la Vega, p. i. Lib. v. c. 7.

time, he had not been able to advance above fifteen leagues, on account of the great windings of the river, and the swamps and torrents with which it was bordered.*

This information determined De Soto to build two brigantines at Guachoya, and to found his projected settlement between that place and Anilco, in a fertile country, where supplies were easily to be had. In this settlement it was his intention to remain, until the brigantines should return with reinforcements and supplies. To enable him to pursue these plans without molestation, it was important for him to conciliate the friendship of the cacique Anilco, whose territories lay adjacent, and who would be enabled to render him much assistance, if an ally, and great annoyance, if an enemy.

The cacique Guachoya, finding out something of the governor's inclinations, advised him to return to the province of Anilco, offering to accompany and aid him with his people. As he would have to recross the river that ran by the village of Anilco, and threw itself into the Mississippi, the cacique offered to supply eighty large, and numerous small canoes. These canoes would have to proceed seven leagues along the Mississippi, to the mouth of the river Anilco, up which they would ascend to the village; the whole distance being twenty leagues of navigation. Meantime the governor and cacique, with their forces, would proceed by land, so as to arrive opposite the village at the same time with the canoes.

Arrangements were made accordingly. As soon as the canoes were ready, four thousand Indian warriors embarked in them, beside the rowers; with these, the governor sent Captain Juan de Guzman and his company, to have command of the canoes, and

* Portuguese Relation, c. 29.

keep the Indians in order. Three days were allowed them for the voyage.

At the same time that the canoes departed, the governor set out by land with his troops, accompanied by the cacique, at the head of two thousand warriors, beside those who carried provisions.

The two expeditions arrived safely at the time appointed, opposite the village. The cacique of Anilco was absent, but the inhabitants of the place made a stand at the pass of the river. Nuño Tobar fell furiously upon them with a party of horse. Eager for the fight, they charged so heedlessly, that each trooper found himself surrounded by a band of Indians. The poor savages, however, were so panic-stricken, that they turned their backs upon the village, and fled in wild disorder to the forests, amid the shouts of the pursuers, and the shrieks and cries of the women and children.* Guachoya now gave full sway to his thirst for vengeance; for, in his whole alliance with the Spaniards, and his advice to the general to revisit this province, he had been actuated, like Casquin, by a secret desire to revenge himself upon an ancient enemy. The province of Anilco and that of Guachoya were in continual hostility; but the former had, for some time, had the advantge, and had brought off many trophies gained in ambush, surprises, and midnight marauds; the mode in which the savages carried on their warfare.

On entering the conquered village, the first thought of the warriors of Guachoya, was to attack the sepulchres of the caciques. They displaced the heads of their countrymen stuck up round the gate, replacing them with those of the enemy. They stripped the sepulchre of all the trophies, of scalps, and banners,

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 29.

taken from the nation in battle; carried off all the relics and ornaments of the dead, threw down their coffins, and scattered about their bones, as had been done on a former occasion. Then, ranging through the village, they massacred all they met, being chiefly old men, women and children, inflicting the most horrible barbarities.

In all this they acted in such fury and haste, that the mischief was effected almost before De Soto was aware of it. He put an end to the carnage as speedily as possible: reprimanded the cacique severely, forbade any one to set fire to a house, or injure an Indian, under pain of death, and hastened to leave the village; taking care that the Indian allies should be the first to pass the river, and none remain behind to do mischief.

His precautions were all ineffectual. He had scarce disembarked and marched a league, when, on looking back, he saw a great smoke arising from the village, and found that several of the houses were in flames. In fact, the warriors of Guachoya, being deterred from open hostility, had secretly placed coals among the straw roofs of the houses. These, being parched with the summer heat, easily took fire, and sprang into a blaze.

The governor would have returned to extinguish the flames, but at this instant he saw many Indians of the neighborhood running towards the village; so, leaving it to their care, he continued his march, deeply annoyed at having his friendly intentions towards Anilco thus defeated, but concealing his anger, lest he should likewise make an enemy of his crafty ally.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. i. Lib. v. c. 6. Herrera, Decad vii. Lib. vii c. 3.

CHAPTER LXXV.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE CACIQUE OF QUIGUALTANQUI—ILLNESS AND DEATH OF DE SOTO.

On taking up his quarters again in the village of Guachoya, the governor set to work, with his usual energy and perseverance, to construct the two brigantines. He ordered the necessary timber to be cut; collected all the ropes and cordage that he could find in the village or the neighborhood, to serve for rigging; employed the Indians to gather for him rosin and gums from pines and other trees; and caused all the spikes and nails saved from the old piraguas, put in order, and an additional quantity made. He had already, in his own mind, selected from among his most faithful and trusty followers, the officers and men who were to embark in the expedition; with the residue of his army, amounting to about five hundred men and fifty horses, he intended to await their return. While, therefore, he urged the building of the brigantines, he cast his eyes about in search of some plentiful region, where he could be sure of subsistence for his army, during the absence of the envoys.

Having heard much concerning the fertility of the great province already mentioned, named Quigualtanqui, which lay on the opposite side of the Mississippi, he sent a party of horse and foot to explore it. The river here was about a mile in width, seven-

teen fathoms deep, and very rapid; having both shores thickly inhabited.* Collecting all the canoes of the village, and fastening the larger ones two and two together, he caused the horses to be passed over in them, while the infantry crossed on the others. They scoured the province of Quigualtanqui, and visited many hamlets, and especially the principal one, immediately opposite to Guachoya, containing five hundred houses. Every where, however, the habitations were deserted; the inhabitants having fled, or hid themselves. The scouting party, therefore, returned, without having effected any thing, but with glowing accounts of the fertility and evident populousness of the province.

These favorable reports determined De Soto to cross the river with his troops, as soon as the brigantines should be dispatched, and to establish his head-quarters in the chief town of Quigualtanqui; there to pass the summer and winter that must intervene before the return of his envoys.

To his infinite chagrin, however, a violent hostility was manifested on the part of the cacique Quigualtanqui. That chieftain, who was of a haughty character and of great power, was extremely tenacious of his territorial sway. He was incensed at the inroad of the Spanish scouting party, and sent messengers to De Soto, swearing by the sun and moon, to wage a war of extermination on him and his people, should any of them dare again to put foot within his boundaries.†

At an earlier date a message of this kind would have been answered by De Soto by an inroad into the cacique's dominions; but his spirits were gradually failing him. He had brooded over his past error, in abandoning the sea-coast, until he was sick at

* Portuguese Relation, c. 29.

† Alonzo de Carmona.—Garcilaso de la Vega, P. i. Lib. v. c. 6.

heart; and as he saw the perils of his situation increasing, new and powerful enemies continually springing up around him, while his scanty force was daily diminishing, he became anxious for the preservation of the residue of his followers, and to avoid all further warfare. He sent an Indian messenger, therefore, to the chieftain, inviting him to friendship. He availed himself of an Indian superstition with respect to himself, and informed the chieftain that he was the son of the sun; the luminary which the natives professed to worship. That, as such, he had received the homage of the caciques of all the provinces through which he had passed. He invited Quigualtanqui to come and pay him like reverence; promising to take him into especial favor, and to reward him with inestimable gifts.

In the mean time, the melancholy which had long preyed upon the spirits of De Soto, the incessant anxiety of mind and fatigue of body, added perhaps to the influence of climate, brought on a slow fever, which at length confined him to his bed.

In the midst of his illness, he received a reply, by his own messenger, from Quigualtanqui. That haughty cacique observed that if what he pretended were true, and he was really the son of the sun, he might prove the fact, by drying up the great river; in which case he should be ready to come over and pay him homage. If he could not do so, he must know that Quigualtanqui, being the greatest chieftain in the land, visited nobody; but received visits and tributes from all. If, therefore, he wished to see him, he must cross the river to his country. If he came as a friend, he should be received as such; if as an enemy, he would find him and his men ready for battle, and resolved never to yield an inch of ground.*

* Portuguese Relation, c. 29.

This taunting reply vexed the spirit of De Soto, and augmented his malady. It was still more irritated by the information that the cacique was endeavoring to form a league of all the neighboring chieftains against him; and he dreaded that some new disasters might occur to delay if not defeat his plans. From his sick bed, however, he maintained his usual vigilance for the safety of his army. The sentinels were doubled, and a rigid watch maintained. Each night the cavalry mounted guard in the suburbs of the village, with bridle in hand, ready for action; while two troopers were constantly upon the patrol, alternately visiting the outposts, and detachments of cross-bow men kept watch upon the river in canoes.*

The schemes and labors and anxieties of De Soto, however, were rapidly drawing to a close; day by day his malady increased upon him, and his fever rose to such a height, that he felt convinced his last hour was at hand. He prepared for death with the steadfastness of a soldier, and all accounts agree, with the piêty of a devout Catholic.

He made his will almost in cipher, for want of sufficient paper; then calling together the officers and soldiers of most note, he nominated, as his successor to the titles and commands of governor and captain general of the kingdom and provinces of Florida, Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado; the same, whom, in the province of Chicaza, he had deposed from the office of master of the camp; and he charged them, on the part of the emperor, and in consideration of the qualities and virtues of Luis de Moscoso, to obey him in the above capacities, until other orders should be received from government. To all this he required them to take an oath with due form and solemnity.

* Portuguese Relation, c. 29.

When this was done, the dying chieftain called to him, by two and two, and three and three, the most noble of his army, and after them he ordered that the soldiery should enter, twenty and twenty, and thirty and thirty, and of all of them he took his last farewell, with great tenderness on his own part, and many tears on theirs. He charged them to convert the natives to the Catholic faith, and to augment the power of the crown of Spain, being himself cut off by death from the accomplishment of these great aims. He thanked them for the affection and fidelity which they had evinced, in fearlessly following his fortunes through such great trials, and expressed his deep regret that it was not in his power to show his gratitude, by rewards such as they merited. He begged the forgiveness of all whom he had offended, and finally, entreated them, in the most affectionate manner, to be peaceful and loving to one another. His fever raged violently, and continued to increase until the seventh day, when, having confessed his sins with much humility and contrition, he expired.*

Thus died Hernando De Soto; one of the boldest and the bravest of the many brave leaders who figured in the first discoveries, and distinguished themselves in the wild warfare of the Western World. How proud and promising had been the commencement of his career! how humble and hapless its close! Cut off in the very vigor and manhood of his days, for he was

* "He died," said the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, in his Chronicle, "like a Catholic Christian, imploring mercy of the most Holy Trinity; relying on the protection of the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, and the intercession of the Virgin, and of all the Celestial Court, and in the faith of the Roman Church.

"With these words, repeating them many times, resigned his soul to God this magnanimous, and never-conquered cavalier, worthy of great dignities and titles, and deserving a better historian than a rude Indian."

but forty-two years old when he expired; perishing in a strange and savage land, amid the din and tumult of a camp, and with merely a few rough soldiers to attend him; for nearly all were engaged in the preparations making for their escape in this perilous situation.

Hernando De Soto was well calculated to command the independent and chivalric spirits of which his army was composed; for, while his ideas of military discipline were very strict, and he punished every breach of military duty, all other offences he easily pardoned. No one was more prompt to notice and reward all soldier-like merit. He is said to have been courteous and engaging in his manners, patient and persevering under difficulties, encouraging his followers by his quiet endurance of suffering. In his own person, he was valiant in the extreme, and of such vigor of arm, that wherever he passed in battle, he is said to have hewn himself a lane through the thickest of the enemy. Some of his biographers have accused him of cruelty towards the poor Indians; but, according to the Inca's account, we find him, in general, humane and merciful; striving to conciliate the natives by presents and kind messages, and only resorting to violent means where the safety of himself and followers were at stake. A striking contrast to his humanity, in this respect, will be presented in the conduct of his successor, Luis de Moscoso.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE BURIAL OF DE SOTO—THE CACIQUE SENDS TWO YOUNG INDIANS TO BE SACRIFICED TO HIS MANES—WHAT LUIS DE MOSCOSO SAID IN REPLY—DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNOR'S EFFECTS.

1542.

THE death of the governor left his followers overwhelmed with grief; they felt as if made orphans by his loss, for they looked up to him as a father: and they sorrowed the more, because they could not give him a proper sepulture, nor perform the solemn obsequies due to the remains of a captain and commander so much beloved and honored.

They feared to bury him publicly, and with becoming ceremonials, lest the Indians should discover the place of his interment, and should outrage and insult his remains, as they had done those of other Spaniards; tearing them from their graves, dismembering them, and hanging them piecemeal from the trees. If they had shown such indignities to the bodies of the common soldiers, how much greater would they inflict upon that of their governor and commander! Besides, De Soto had impressed them with a very exalted opinion of his prudence and valor; and the Spaniards, therefore, dreaded, lest finding out the death of their leader, they might be induced to revolt, and fall upon their handful of troops.*

* Portuguese Relation, c. 30.

For these reasons, they buried him in the dead of night, with sentinels posted to keep the natives at a distance, that the sad ceremony might be safe from the observation of their spies. The place chosen for his sepulture, was one of many pits, broad and deep, in a plain, near to the village, from whence the Indians had taken earth for their buildings. Here he was interred, in silence and in secret, with many tears of the priests and cavaliers, who were present at his mournful obsequies. The better to deceive the Indians, and prevent their suspecting the place of his interment, they gave out, on the following day, that the governor was recovering from his malady, and, mounting their horses, they assumed an appearance of rejoicing. That all traces of the grave might be lost, they caused much water to be sprinkled over it, and upon the surrounding plain, as if to prevent the dust being raised by their horses. They then scoured the plain, and galloped about the pits, and over the very grave of their commander; but it was difficult, under this cover of pretended gayety, to conceal the real sadness of their hearts.

With all these precautions, they soon found out that the Indians suspected, not only the death of the governor, but the place where he lay buried: for, in passing by the pits they would stop, look round attentively on all sides, talk with one another, and make sign with their chins and their eyes toward the spot where the body was interred.

The Spaniards perceiving this, and feeling assured that the Indians would search the whole plain until they found the body, determined to disinter it, and place it where it would be secure from molestation. No place appeared better suited to the purpose than the Mississippi; but first they wished to ascertain whether there was sufficient depth to hide the body effectually.

Accordingly, Juan de Añasco, and other officers, taking with them a mariner, embarked one evening in a canoe, under the pretence of fishing and amusing themselves; and, sounding the river where it was a quarter of a league wide, they found, in the mid-channel, a depth of nineteen fathoms. Here, therefore, they determined to deposit the body.

As there was no stone in the neighborhood wherewith to sink it, they cut down an evergreen oak, and made an excavation in one side, of the size of a man. On the following night, with all the silence possible, they disinterred the body, and placed it in the trunk of the oak, nailing planks over the aperture. The rustic coffin was then conveyed to the centre of the river. The hooded priests and steel-clad cavaliers gathered round the remains of the chief who had led them through all their perilous wanderings, and at the still hour of midnight they committed the body to the stream, watching it sink to the bottom through scalding tears, and commending anew the soul of the good cavalier to Heaven, they sadly worked their way back to the shore "The discoverer of the Mississippi slept beneath its waters. He had crossed a large part of the continent in search of gold, and found nothing so remarkable as his burial place."*

The Indians, soon perceiving that the governor was not with the army, nor buried, as they had supposed, demanded of the Spaniards where he was. The general reply prepared for the occasion, was, that God had sent for him, to communicate to him great things, which he was commanded to perform, as soon as he should return to earth. With this answer, the Indians remained apparently content.†

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. i. Lib. iv. c. 8.

† Alonzo de Carmona and Juan Coles. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. i. Lib. v c. 8.

The cacique, however, who believed him to be dead, sent two handsome young Indians to Moscoso, with the message, that it was the custom of his country, when any great prince died, to put to death some persons to attend him, and serve him on his journey to the land of spirits; and for that purpose, these young men presented themselves. Luis de Moscoso replied, that the governor was not dead, but gone to heaven, and had chosen some of his Christian followers to attend him there; he therefore prayed Guachoya to receive again the two Indian youths, and to renounce so barbarous a custom for the future. He accordingly set the Indians at liberty on the spot, and ordered them to return to their homes; but one of them refused to go, saying that he would not serve a master who had condemned him to death without a cause, but would ever follow one who had saved his life.*

De Soto's effects, consisting in all of two slaves, three horses, and seven hundred swine, were disposed of at public sale. The slaves and horses were sold for three thousand crowns each; the money to be paid by the purchaser on the first discovery of any gold or silver mines, or as soon as he should be proprietor of a plantation in Florida. Should neither of these events come to pass, the buyer pledged himself to pay the money within a year. The swine were sold in like manner, at two hundred crowns apiece. Henceforth, the greater number of the soldiers possessed this desirable article of food, which they ate of on all days save Fridays, Saturdays, and the eves of festivals, which they rigidly observed, according to the customs of the Roman Catholics. This abstinence they were not able to practise before, as they were frequently without meat for two or three months together, and when they found any, were glad to devour it, without regard to days.†

* Portuguese Relation, c. 30. † Ibid.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

THE SPANIARDS, UNDER THE COMMAND OF LUIS DE MOSCOSO, COMMENCE THEIR MARCH TO THE WESTWARD—ARRIVAL AT THE PROVINCE OF CHAGUATE, WHERE THEY FIND SALT.

1542.

After their first grief for the loss of their illustrious commander, many in the army began to doubt whether it was really a calamity. Some even thought it matter of rejoicing; for many of the officers and soldiers had long been disheartened and discontented by their toils and sufferings, and the disappointment of their expectations of golden spoils. Nothing but their respect for De Soto, and the sway he maintained over them, had prevented their abandoning so disastrous a country. They were now in hopes that the new governor, who was devoutly inclined, would choose rather to seek rest and repose in some Christian land, than to follow out the schemes of De Soto.

Luis de Moscoso immediately called a council, to deliberate upon what was to be done; and it was determined, by the common consent of the leading men, to leave their present position as soon as possible. Moscoso requested each officer to hand in his written opinion, whether they should follow the course of the river, or strike across the country to the westward.

Juan de Añasco, the contador, was for carrying out the views and plans of De Soto. He not only opposed the idea of suddenly abandoning the country, but offered to guide the army in a brief space of time, to the frontiers of Mexico: for he piqued himself upon his knowledge of geography, and presumed by its aid to deliver his comrades out of all their difficulties.

The proposition of Añasco derived support from the recollection of certain rumors which the Indians had brought, some months before, that not far to the westward, there were other Spaniards, who were going about conquering the country. These rumors, being brought to mind, were now adopted as truths; and it was concluded that those Spaniards to the westward must have sallied forth from Mexico, to conquer new kingdoms; and as, according to the account of the Indians, they could not be far distant, it was determined to march with all speed in that direction, and join them in their career of conquest.

On the fourth or fifth of June the army set out on its march, under the command of its new governor and captain-general, Luis de Moscoso; directing its course westward, determining to turn neither to the right nor the left. By keeping in that direction, they supposed that they must arrive at the confines of Mexico: not perceiving that, according to their geography, they were in a much higher latitude than that of New Spain.

A young Indian, sixteen or seventeen years of age, finely formed and handsome in countenance, followed the Spaniards of his own accord, when they left this province. The circumstance was mentioned to Luis de Moscoso, from a suspicion that he might prove to be a spy. The general ordered the stripling to be brought before him, and, through his interpreters, demanded the cause of his leaving his parents, his relations and friends, to

follow a people whom he did not know? "Senior," replied he, "I am poor, and an orphan; my parents died when I was very young, and left me destitute. An Indian chief of my native village, a near relative of the cacique, took compassion on me, led me to his home, and brought me up among his children. When you left the village, he was grievously sick, and his life was despaired of. His wife and children determined that, in case he should die, I should be buried with him alive; because, they said, that my master had cherished an dtenderly loved me, and that I must therefore go along with him to serve him in the world whither he had gone. Now, although I am deeply grateful to him for having sheltered and fostered me, and love his memory, yet I have no desire to share his grave. Seeing no other way to escape this death, but by going with the strangers, I preferred being their slave to being buried alive. This, and this alone, is the cause of my coming."*

The Spaniards perceived, by this and the instance already mentioned, that the superstitious custom of burying alive the wives and servants with the dead body of the master, was observed in this country, as in all the other regions yet discovered in the new world.

After leaving Guachoya, the Spaniards passed through the province of Catalte; then across a desert country, to another province called Chaguate, where they arrived on the twentieth of June. The cacique had already visited the Spaniards, during the lifetime of De Soto, when quartered at Utiangue, and now resumed a friendly intercourse. Near the chief village of this province they found the Indians busily employed in making salt, at a saline spring like a fountain-head. Here the troops re-

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. v. Part ii. c. 2.

mained six days, supplying themselves with this necessary article They then continued their march westward, in quest of the province of Aguacay, which they were told lay at the distance of three days' journey.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

DISAPPEARANCE OF DIEGO DE GUZMAN—CAUSE OF HIS DESERTION.

1542.

On the second day of their march, the governor was informed that one of their number, named Diego de Guzman, was missing. He immediately ordered a halt, and entered into a diligent investigation of the matter; apprehending that Guzman might have been been detained or murdered by the Indians.

This Diego de Guzman was one of the many young Spanish cavaliers, who had joined this expedition with romantic notions of conquest, and glory, and golden gain. He was of a good family, and rich, and enlisted in the enterprise in brilliant style; with costly raiment, splendid armor and weapons, and three fine horses. Unluckily, he was passionately fond of play, and had but too frequent opportunities of indulging in it; for the Spaniards passed much of their leisure time in their encampments in gambling, as is usual with soldiery, and especially with young hap-hazard adventurers, such as formed a great part of this band of discoverers.

In the conflagration of Mauvila, all their cards were burned; but they made others of parchment, painted with admirable skill: and, as they could not make a sufficient supply for the number of gamesters, the packs went the rounds, and were lent from one to

the other for limited times. With these they gambled under the trees, in their wigwams, or on the river banks; or wherever they might have any idle hours to while away.

Diego de Guzman was one of the keenest; but a run of ill-luck had gradually stripped him of all that he had brought to the army, or captured on the march; and but four days before the march, he had lost his clothes, his arms, a horse, and a female captive, recently taken in the course of a foray. De Guzman had honorably paid all his losses, until it came to his captive, but here there was a struggle between pride and affection. The girl was but eighteen years of age, and extremely beautiful; so that he had conceived a passion for her. He had put off the winner, therefore, with the assurance that he would give her up to him in the course of four or five days. De Guzman had been seen in the camp the day before the march: he was now missing, and the girl had disappeared likewise. On hearing all these circumstances, the governor concluded that, ashamed of having lost his arms and steed, and unwilling to give up his Indian beauty, he had escaped with her to her people. He was confirmed in this suspicion, on hearing that the female was the daughter of the cacique of Chaguate.

The general now summoned before him four chiefs of the province, who were among his escort, and ordered them to cause the Spaniard who had deserted to be sought out and brought to the camp: telling them that unless he was produced, he should conclude that he had been treacherously murdered, and should revenge his death.

The chiefs, terrified for their own safety, sent messengers in all speed. They returned with the account that De Guzman was with the cacique, who was feasting him and treating him with all

possible kindness and distinction, and that he could not be prevailed upon to return to the army.

The governor refused all credit to this story, and persisted in his surmises that De Guzman had been murdered. Upon this, one of the chiefs turned to the governor with a proud and lofty air. "We are not men," said he, "who would tell you falsehoods If you doubt the truth of what the messengers have said, send one of us four to bring you some testimonial of the fact; and if he bring not back the Spaniard, or some satisfactory proof that he is alive and well, the three of us that remain in your hands will answer for his loss with our lives."

The proposition pleased the governor and his officers; and, after consultation, Baltazar de Gallegos, who was a friend and townsman of De Guzman, was instructed to write to him, condemning the step he had taken, and exhorting him to return and perform his duty as became a cavalier; assuring him that his horse and arms should be restored to him, and others given to him in case of need. An accompanying message was sent to the cacique, threatening him with fire and sword unless he delivered up the fugitive.

The following day the messenger returned, bringing back the letter of Gallegos, with the name of De Guzman written upon it in charcoal; a proof that he was alive. He sent not a word, however, in reply to the contents of the letter; and the messenger said that he had no intention nor wish to rejoin the army.

The cacique, on his own part, sent word, assuring the governor that he had used no force to detain Diego de Guzman in his territories, nor should he use any to compel him to depart; but rather, as a son-in-law who had restored to him a beloved daughter, he would treat him with all possible honor and kindness, and

would do the same to any of the strangers who chose to remain with him. If, for having done his duty in this matter, the governor thought proper to lay waste his lands and destroy his people, he had the power in his hands, and could do as he pleased.*

The governor, seeing that Diego de Guzman would not return, and feeling that the cacique was justifiable in not delivering him up, abandoned all further attempt to recover him, and set the Indian chiefs at liberty, who continued, however, to attend him until he reached the frontier.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. i. Lib. v. c. 2.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE ARMY ARRIVES AT NAGUATEX — A SEVERE BRUSH WITH THE NATIVES—IMMINENT PERIL OF TWO TROOPERS AND FOUR FOOT-SOLDIERS—SEVERE TREATMENT OF THE INDIAN CAPTIVES—INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE CACIQUE NAGUATEX AND MOSCOSO—THE SPANIARDS PERPLEXED BY A PHENOMENON.

1542.

THE next province traversed by the Spaniards was named Aguacay, and abounded with salt; they encamped one evening on the borders of a lake, the waters of which were strongly impregnated with it. The Indians formed the salt into small cakes, by means of earthen moulds, and used it as an article of traffic. At the chief village of the province, the Spaniards fancied, from the replies of the inhabitants to their questions, that they had some knowledge of the South Sea; but it is probable they were deceived by the blunders of their interpreters.

After leaving Aguacay, they crossed the province of Maye, and on the twentieth of July encamped beside a pleasant wood, on the confines of the province of Naguatex. They had scarce come to a halt, when a body of Indians were observed hovering at a distance. A party of horse immediately sallied forth, and dashing into the midst of them, killed six, and brought two prisoners to the camp. They confessed that they were a scouting party, sent by the cacique to reconnoitre the strangers, and

that Naguatex himself was at hand with his warriors, aided by two neighboring chieftains. While yet talking, the enemy appeared in two battalions, and assailed the camp in two places, but were soon put to flight. The horse pursued them, and fell into an ambush which had been laid for them by two other bands, and these they equally succeeded in routing.

In the mean time, two troopers and four foot-soldiers, who had pursued the first assailants too hotly, were surrounded, and assailed on all sides. The troopers behaved manfully, wheeling round their more exposed companions, rushing upon the Indians with their horses, and keeping them at bay with their spears; in the mean time they all called out lustily for aid. Their cries reached the camp. Twelve troopers came galloping to their assistance: the Indians fled at their approach: many of them were slain, and one taken prisoner. Moscoso immediately ordered that his nose and right arm should be cut off, and he sent him thus cruelly mutilated to Naguatex, with a threat that he would next day enter his country with fire and sword.

The ensuing day Moscoso pushed forward to execute his threats, but a large river intervened between him and the residence of the cacique. He halted on the banks, and beheld a powerful force collected on the opposite side, to oppose his passage. Not knowing the ford, and several of the men and horses being wounded, he took counsel of his wrath, and, drawing back about a quarter of a league from the river, encamped near a village by a clear and beautiful wood, preferring the open air to any habitation, as the weather was calm and pleasant. Here he remained a few days, to give his troops time to recover from their wounds and fatigues. In the mean time, parties of horse explored the river, forded it in two places, in spite of the opposi-

tion of the natives, and found a populous and abundant country on the other side.

The governor, having now had time to recover from the anger caused by the rough assault of the cacique of Naguatex, sent an Indian with a message to him, proffering him pardon for the past, on condition of repentance and submission; but, otherwise, denouncing exterminating vengeance. The message had the desired effect. The Indian returned, bringing a promise from the cacique that he would make his appearance the next day. On the following morning, a great number of the principal subjects of Naguatex came to the camp, announced that the cacique was at hand, and, having apparently taken note of the governor's looks, and disposition of his men, returned to give an account of the same to their chieftain. At length the cacique was seen approaching at a distance. A great band of his principal men marched two and two in front, all weeping and lamenting, as if in contrition for the past. When the head couple had arrived in presence of the governor, they all halted, fell back on each side, and formed a lane, up which the cacique advanced. Bending in a supplicating manner before the governor, he begged forgiveness for what he had done, attributing his rash hostility to the bad counsels of one of his brothers, who had fallen in the fight. He acknowledged the Spaniards as immortal, the governor as invincible, and concluded by offering his obedience and services. Moscoso accepted his proffered allegiance, and dismissed him with assurances of friendship. Four days afterwards he broke up his camp and marched to the river side, but was surprised to find it swollen and impassable, although it was summer time, and no rain had fallen for a month. The Indians, however, assured him that this swelling of the river often happened without rain, and generally during the increase of the moon.

The Spaniards, perplexed at this phenomenon, and little acquainted with the great extent of these rivers, and the sudden effects of rain among the distant mountains and extensive prairies where they take their rise, surmised that the swellings, during the waxing of the moon, might be caused by the influx of the sea into the river, although none of the Indians had any knowledge of the sea.

At the end of eight days the river had subsided sufficiently to be fordable; the army then crossed; but, on coming to the town of the cacique, found it abandoned. The governor encamped in the open fields, and sent for the cacique to come to him and furnish him with a guide. Naguatex, however, was afraid to venture to the camp. Upon this the ire of Moscoso was again kindled, and he sent out two captains with troops of horse, to burn down the villages and make captives of the inhabitants. The country was soon wrapped in smoke and flame, and several Indians were captured. The cacique was again brought to terms, and sent several of his principal people as hostages, and three guides who understood the language of the countries the Spaniards were to march through. The governor was once more pacified, and set forward on his western march. Such were the rough circumstances that attended the sojourn of the Spaniards in the province of Naguatex.*

* The name of this province is spelled in the same manner (Naguatex) both in the Spanish and Portuguese narrations. It has been identified with Nachitoches, by some modern writers, who suppose the village of the cacique to have stood on the site of the present town of that name. It appears to the author, however, that the modern Nachitoches lies to the south of the route of Moscoso, though it may have been called after the old Indian village, situated more to the northward. It is almost impossible to identify any of the places visited by the Spaniards in their wild wanderings west of the Mississippi.

CHAPTER LXXX.

VAGUE TIDINGS OF EUROPEANS TO THE WEST—WANDERING IN A WILDERNESS—TREACHERY OF AN OLD INDIAN GUIDE, AND HIS FATE—THE HUNTING GROUNDS OF THE FAR WEST.

1542.

The army now pressed forward, by forced marches, more than a hundred leagues, through various provinces, more or less populous and fertile; but some of them extremely barren, and almost uninhabited. The Portuguese narrator of the expedition gives the names of some of these provinces, such as Missobone, Lacane, Mandacao, Socatino, and Guasco. In one of the provinces, they observed wooden crosses placed on the tops of the houses, and were struck with the sight of this Christian emblem. They began to flatter themselves that they were approaching the confines of New Spain, and made incessant inquiries, in every province that they entered, whether the inhabitants knew any thing of Christian people to the west. Where all intelligence had to pass from mouth to mouth, through several interpreters, indifferently acquainted with each other's language, and finally to be communicated by an Indian lad, who was but moderately versed in Spanish, it is easy to perceive what vague and erroneous ideas must be imparted. Some of the natives, it is probable, wilfully deceived the Spaniards; others misunderstood the kind

of people about whom they were inquiring. In this way they received tidings, as they thought, of Europeans that had been seen farther to the west; and whom they persuaded themselves were parties of discoverers, making incursions from New Spain. They brightened up with the hopes of meeting with some party of the kind, or, at any rate, coming to regions subjugated and colonized by their countrymen, where they would no longer be in danger of perishing in a trackless wilderness, but might choose either to abide securely in the new world, or return to their native country

Thus they went on, from place to place, lured by false hopes and idle tales. When they reached places where they had been assured they would come upon the traces of white men, the inhabitants declared their utter ignorance of any people of the kind. In the transports of vexation and disappointment, Moscoso would order the poor savages to be put to the rack. This only served to extort from them false replies, suited to his wishes, but which led him and his army to farther unprofitable wandering and additional disappointment.*

Moscoso and his followers, moreover, suffered extremely for the want of intelligent and faithful guides. Sometimes they erred from misinterpretation of the routes; at other times, they were purposely led astray. When they had journeyed far to the west, they came to a vast uninhabited region, where they wandered for many days, until their provisions were exhausted, and they had nothing to appease their hunger but herbs and roots. To their great dismay, also, they found that an old Indian warrior, who had been furnished by a cacique as a guide, was leading them in a circle, heading from time to time to different points of the com

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. v. P. i. c. 2.

pass. Upon this, Moscoso, suspecting his fidelity, ordered him to be tied to a tree, and the dogs to be let loose upon him. One of them sprang upon him instantly, and began to shake him. The Indian, in his terror, confessed that he had been ordered by his cacique to bewilder and lose them in uninhabited deserts, but offered to take them, in three days, to a populous country to the west. Moscoso, however, listening only to his indignation at this treachery, again ordered the dogs to be let loose, who, ravenous with hunger, tore the unfortunate wretch to pieces.

Having in this shocking manner gratified their passion, the Spaniards found themselves worse off than before, for they had no one to guide them, having given permission to the other Indians, who had brought the supplies, to return home. In this dilemma, they followed the directions of their victim, by marching directly westward; thus giving credit, after his death, to what they disbelieved while he was living.

They travelled three days, suffering excessively for want of food. Fortunately the forests were clear and open; had they been so dense as those through which they had formerly passed, they would have perished with hunger before they could make their way through them. They journeyed always to the westward, and at the end of three days descried, from a rising ground, the signs of human habitations. The inhabitants, however, fled to the woods on their approach, and they found the country meagre and sterile. The villages differed from the past. the houses being scattered about the fields in groups of four and five, rudely constructed, and resembling the hovels erected in melon fields in Spain to guard the fruit, rather than habitable houses. In these cabins they found abundance of fresh buffalo meat, with which they appeased their hunger. There were many buffalo hides, also,

recently flayed; but the Spaniards could never meet with the living animals. From the abundant traces of horned cattle thus found in the habitations, they called this the Province of the Vaqueros, or Herdsmen.*

* It is evident that the Spaniards were on the hunting grounds of the Far West—the great buffalo prairies. It is probable that the scattered and slight wigwams thus visited, were mere hunting camps.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

FEATS OF INDIVIDUAL PROWESS OF THE INDIANS OF THE FAR WEST

1542.

The Indians of the far west have always been noted for their gallant and martial bearing, and their proneness to feats of individual prowess and bravado. In their wanderings through this wild hunting region, the Spaniards had frequent instances of the kind, two or three of which are worthy of especial notice. In the course of their march through the province of Los Vaqueros, they encamped one afternoon in an open plain. The Spaniards stretched themselves on the ground to repose, while their Indian attendants prepared their repast. While thus reclining, they observed an Indian warrior sally out of an adjacent wood and approach the camp. He was gayly painted, had a bow in his hand, a quiver of arrows over his right shoulder, and waving plumes upon his head.

The Spaniards, seeing him advance alone, and peacefully, imagined that he was charged with some message from his cacique to the governor, and allowed him to draw nigh. He came within fifty paces of a group of soldiers, who were conversing together; then, suddenly fixing an arrow in his bow, he sent it in the midst of them.

The Spaniards seeing him bend his bow, some sprang aside,

others threw themselves upon the ground. The arrow whistled by without touching them, but flying beyond, where five or six female Indians were under a tree, preparing dinner for their masters, it struck one in the shoulders, and passing through her body, buried itself in the bosom of another; they both fell and expired. The savage then turned, and fled with surprising speed to the woods. The Spaniards beat the alarm and shouted after him. The captain, Baltazar de Gallegos, being by chance on horseback, heard the shout, and saw the savage flying; suspecting the cause, he gave chase, overtook him close to the wood, and transfixed him with his lance.

Three days after this, the army halted for a day to repose in a beautiful plain, of the same province. While thus indulging, they saw, about ten in the morning, two Indian warriors approaching across the plain. They were fine-looking fellows, decorated with lofty plumes, bearing their bows in their hands, and their quivers at their backs. They stalked to within two hundred paces of the camp, and then began to walk round a large nut-tree, not side by side, but circling in opposite directions, so as to pass each other, and guard one another's backs. In this way they kept on all day, without deigning to take any notice of the Negroes, Indians, women and boys, who occasionally passed near them, bringing water and wood.

The Spaniards understood from this that they came not for the domestics, but for them, and they forthwith reported to the governor what they had observed. He ordered that no soldier should go out to them, but that they should be left alone as madmen.

The Indians continued their circumvolutions about the tree, waiting patiently, it would seem, for some of the Spaniards to

take up this singular challenge. It was near sunset, when a company of horse, who had been out since morning scouring the country, returned. Their quarters were near the place where this extraordinary scene was acting, and observing it, they asked, "What Indians are these?" Having learnt the order of the governor, that they should be unmolested as two madmen, it was obeyed by all except a headlong soldier named Juan Paez, who, eager to exhibit his valor, exclaimed, "A pest upon them; here's one madder than they, who will cure their madness!" So saying, he spurred towards them. When the Indians saw but a single Spaniard advancing to attack them, the one who was nearest to Paez stepped forth to receive him, and the other, separating, placed himself under a tree; thus manifesting a wish to fight man to man, and disregarding the advantage that the Spaniard had in being mounted. The soldier spurred upon the Indian at full speed, to bear him down with the shock. His adversary waited, with an arrow in his bow, until he came within shot, when he sped his shaft. It struck Juan Paez in the muscular part of the left arm, passed through it, and through both sides of a sleeve of mail, and remained crossed in the wound. The arm dropped powerless, the reins slipped from the hand, and the horse, feeling them fall, stopped of a sudden, as horses are often trained to do.

The companions of Juan Paez, who had not yet alighted, seeing his peril, galloped to his rescue. The Indians, not choosing to encounter such odds, fled to a neighboring wood, but before they could reach it were overtaken and lanced to death. In this affair the savages certainly showed a spirit of chivalry, and a punctilio as to the laws of the duel, which merited a better return at the hands of Spanish cavaliers.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. v. P. ii. c. 4.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

THE SPANIARDS COME IN SIGHT OF HIGH MOUNTAINS TO THE WEST—EXPLORING PARTIES SENT OUT TO DISCOVER THE COUNTRY—THE REPORT THEY BRING BACK—MOSCOSO CALLS A COUNCIL OF HIS OFFICERS—THEIR DETERMINATION.

1542.

After traversing the wild waste of country which the Spaniards called the Province of Los Vaqueros, they came to a river called Daycao, which was a favorite hunting resort of the Indians; great quantities of deer feeding along its banks. They had been told that the country beyond it was inhabited; and Moscoso sent out a party of horse to cross the river, and to beat up the opposite bank. They found a village, consisting of a few miserable hovels, and captured two of the inhabitants; but none of the interpreters could understand their language.

The Spaniards now saw to the west a series of mountains and forests; and learnt that the country was without inhabitants. Their hearts began to fail them. The hunger and toil they had already experienced, rendered them loth to penetrate these savage regions. The governor, therefore, determined to remain encamped, and to send out light parties to explore the country to the west. Three bands of horsemen accordingly set off, each in a different direction; and penetrated to the distance of thirty leagues.

They found the country sterile, thinly peopled, and it appeared worse and worse the further they proceeded. They captured some of the inhabitants, who assured them that further on it was still more destitute; the natives did not live in villages, nor dwell in houses; neither did they cultivate the soil, but were a wandering people, roving in bands, gathering fruits and herbs, and roots of spontaneous growth, and depending occasionally upon hunting and fishing for subsistence: passing from place to place, according as the seasons were favorable to their pursuits.*

At the end of fifteen days, the exploring parties were all back again in the camp, bringing nearly the same accounts. Their united reports brought the governor completely to a stand. To prosecute his march to New Spain through such wildernesses as were described to him, would be to run the risk of losing himself and his troops in famishing and trackless deserts. He now recollected what had been related by Alvar Nuñez, of races of Indians that he had met with, unsettled in their abode, wandering about like the wild Arabs, feeding on roots and herbs, and the produce of the chase; and he fancied such savage hordes roved about the country before him. Indeed, it was probable that all the rumors he had heard of Christians seen by the Indians, might relate to Alvar Nuñez and his companions, who, on their way to New Spain, after their shipwreck with Pamphilo de Narvaez, had passed as captives from tribe to tribe of the inhabitants of these lands. It is true, they kept near the sea-coast, far to the south of the track of Moscoso, but the fame of such wonderful strangers might have penetrated to the interior; for reports are carried to vast distances among Indian tribes. The crosses, also,

* This description answers to the character and habits of the Pawnees, Comanches, and other tribes of the Far West.

which Moscoso had observed in one of the provinces through which he had passed, might have been put up by the Indians as talismans, in consequence of the fame of apparently miraculous cures made by Alvar Nuñez and his men, who always carried a cross in their hands when they visited the sick, and made the sign of the cross over their patients.

The delusive reports, therefore, of Christians to the west, which had encouraged the Spaniards to proceed, had now died away. They had nothing but savage wastes before them, infested by barbarous people, with whom it was impossible to keep up a friendly understanding for want of an interpreter. It was already the beginning of October; if they lingered much longer, the rains and snows of winter would cut off their return, and they might perish with cold and hunger. Moscoso was weary in soul and body, and longed to be in a place where his sleep would not be broken by continual alarms. He called a council, therefore, of his officers, and proposed that they should give up all further progress to the west, make the best of their way back to the Mississippi, build vessels there, and descend that river to the ocean.

The proposition was by no means relished by some, who, notwithstanding all their sufferings and disappointments, had still a lingering hope of finding some country rich enough to repay them for all their toils. They represented that Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca had told the emperor of his having come into a country where cotton grew, and where he saw gold, silver, and precious stones. That they had not yet come to those regions of which Alvar Nuñez spoke, but might do so by keeping forward. Besides, they had actually met with cotton mantles and torquoises at a province called Guasco, and had understood from the

natives that they came from a country to the west; which was doubtless the country that Alvar Nuñez had spoken of. They were, therefore, for persisting in their desperate march westward; nay, some of them declared they would rather perish in the wilderness, than return beggared and miserable to Europe, from an expedition undertaken with such high and vaunting anticipations.

Sager counsels, however, prevailed, and after much deliberation it was determined to retrace their steps to the Mississippi.

Note.—The march of Moscoso west of the Mississippi has been rendered from the Spanish and Portuguese accounts; but they vary so much on some points, and are so vague on others, and the regions to which they relate are so vast, and, until very recently, so little known, that it is next to impossible to trace the route of the wanderers with any thing approaching to precision. They evidently traversed the hunting grounds of the Far West, the range of the buffalo, and got upon the upper prairies, which, in many parts, are little better than deserts. The river Dacayo, which is only mentioned by the Portuguese narrator, has been supposed to be the 'Rio del Oro' of Cabeza de Vaca. He makes them return from the banks of this river; but the Spanish historian affirms that they saw great chains of mountains and forests to the west, which they understood were uninhabited. It has been conjectured that these were the skirts of the Rocky Mountains. As, according to the Portuguese account, they departed from the banks of the Mississippi for the Far West, on the fifth of June, and did not get back there until the beginning of December, they were six months on this march and countermarch, which, with all their haltings, would give them time to penetrate a great distance into the interior.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

HARASSING MARCH OF THE SPANIARDS—THE TROOPER—HIS MISADVENTURE.

1542.

The Spaniards had now a long and dreary march before them, with no novelty ahead to cheer them on, and a country to traverse, the savage inhabitants of which had been rendered hostile by their previous invasion, and its resources laid waste by their foraging parties. They endeavored to remedy these disadvantages as much as possible by making a bend to the south, so as to avoid the desolate tracts they had recently traversed, and to find regions more abundant in provisions.

They journeyed by forced marches, and took every precaution not to provoke the Indians; the latter, however, were on the alert, and harassed them at all hours of day and night. Sometimes they concealed themselves in woods, by which the Spaniards had to pass; in the more open country they would lie upon the ground, covered by the tall grass and weeds, and as the soldiers, seeing no enemy, came carelessly along, the wily savages would suddenly spring up, discharge a shower of arrows, and immediately take to flight.

These assaults were so many and frequent, that one band

would scarcely be repulsed from the vanguard, when another attacked the rear, and frequently the line of march was assailed in three or four places at the same time, with great loss and injury both of men and horses. In fact, it was in this province of Los Vaqueros that the Spaniards, without coming hand to hand with the enemy, received more injury than in any other through which they passed. This was especially the case in the course of the last day's march, when their route was extremely rough, through woods, and across streams and ravines, and other dangerous passes, peculiarly fit for ambush and surprise. Here the savages, who were well acquainted with the ground, had them at their mercy, waylaying them at every step, wounding Spaniards, and horses, and the Indian servants who accompanied the army.

The last of these assaults happened just before arriving at the place of encampment, as they crossed a brook overhung with trees and thickets. Just as one of the horsemen, named Sanjurge, was in the middle of the brook, an arrow shot from among the bushes on the bank struck him in the rear, pierced his cuirass of mail, passed through the muscle of his right thigh, then through the saddle-tree and paddings, and buried itself in the horse. The wounded animal sprang out of the brook, sallied forth upon the plain, and went on plunging and kicking to get clear of the arrow and his rider.

The comrades of Sanjurge hastened to his assistance. Finding him nailed, in a manner, to the saddle, and the army having halted to encamp hard by, they led him on horseback as he was to his allotted quarters. Lifting him gently from his seat, they cut off the shaft of the arrow between the saddle and the wound; after which, taking off the saddle, they found that the injury to the horse was but slight. What surprised them, however, was

that the shaft, which had penetrated through so many substances, was a mere reed, with the end hardened in the fire. Such was the vigor of arm with which these Indian archers plied their bows.

This Sanjurge had enjoyed a kind of charlatan reputation among the soldiers, for curing wounds with oil, wool, and certain words, which he called a charm. At the battle of Mauvila, however, all the oil and wool had been burnt, and Sanjurge's miraculous cures were at an end. His whole surgical skill being confined to his nostrum and charm, he was now fain to call in the aid of the surgeon to extract the head of an arrow which was lodged in his knee. The operation was so painful, however, that he railed at the surgeon for a bungler, and swore he would rather die than come again under his hands, and the latter replied that he might die and welcome, before he would have any thing to do with him again.

In his present wounded state, however, Sanjurge was in a sad dilemma, having no nostrums of his own, and being precluded from the assistance of the surgeon. At length he thought of a substitute for his old remedy, and, making use of hog's lard, instead of oil, and the shreds of an Indian mantle, instead of wool, he dressed his wound with them, and pronounced his vaunted charm. Faith and a good constitution work miracles in quackery. In the course of four days that the army remained encamped to attend to the sick, Sanjurge had so far recovered as to resume his saddle, galloping up and down in vaunting style among the soldiery, whose faith in his nostrum and his charm became stronger than ever.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Part ii. Lib. v. c. 5.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

FRANCISCO, THE GENOESE, WITH SEVERAL OF HIS COMRADES, LIE IN AMBUSH TO ENTRAP SOME OF THE NATIVES—THE SEVERE SKIRMISH THEY HAVE WITH AN INDIAN, AND THE RESULT.

1542.

After leaving the disastrous province of Los Vaqueros, the Spaniards continued for twenty days, by forced marches, through other lands, of which they did not know the name, taking but little pains to gain information, their only object now being to get to the Mississippi.

Although they avoided all pitched battles with the natives, they continued to be harassed by them incessantly. Did a soldier chance to wander a short distance from his comrades, he was instantly shot down. In this manner no less than forty Spaniards were picked off by lurking foes. By night the Indians would enter the camp on all fours, or drawing themselves along like snakes, without being heard, and thus shoot down horses, and even sentinels who were off their guard.

One day, when the army was about to march, Francisco, the Genoese carpenter, obtained permission of the governor for himself and several troopers, who were in want of servants, to remain

behind, and lie in ambush at the place of encampment, for the Indians were accustomed to visit those places as soon as the Spaniards had abandoned them, to pick up any articles they might have left behind.

A dozen horse and twelve foot concealed themselves, accordingly, in a thick clump of trees, one of their companions climbing to the top of the highest to look out and give notice should any Indians approach. In four sallies they captured fourteen of the enemy without any resistance. These they divided among them, two falling to the share of Francisco the shipwright, as leader of the detachment. The party would then have rejoined the army, but Francisco refused, alleging that he needed another Indian, and that he would not return until he had captured one.

All the efforts of his comrades to shake this foolhardy determination were in vain; each of them offered to give up the Indian that had fallen to his share, but he refused to accept the boon. Yielding, therefore, to his obstinacy, they remained with him in ambush.

In a little while the sentinel in the tree gave warning that an Indian was near. One of the horsemen, the same Juan Paez who had recently been wounded in the arm, dashed forth with his wonted impetuosity, and rode full speed at the Indian. The latter, as usual, took refuge under a tree. Paez galloped close by the tree, giving a passing thrust with his lance across the left arm at the Indian. He missed his aim, but his enemy was more successful; for as the horse passed, he drew his arrow to the head, and buried it just behind the left stirrup leather. The horse plunged several paces forward, and fell dead. Francisco de Bolanos, a comrade and townsman of Paez, had followed close behind him; he attacked the Indian in the same way, and failed

in his blow likewise; his horse received a similar wound, and went stumbling forward to fall beside his predecessor.

The two dismounted horsemen, recovering from their fall, made at the Indian with their lances, while, from the other side, a cavalier, named Juan de Vega, came galloping towards him on horseback. The Indian, thus assailed on both sides, rushed forth from under the tree to encounter the horseman, perceiving, that if he could kill the horse, he could easily escape from his dismounted antagonists by his superior swiftness of foot.

With this intent he sped an arrow at the breast of the horse, as he came charging upon him, which would have cleft his heart but for a breastplate of three folds of tough bull-hide with which his rider had provided him. The arrow passed through the breastplate, and penetrated a hand's breadth in the flesh. The horse continued his career, and Juan de Vega transfixed the savage with his lance.

The Spaniards grieved over the loss of the two horses, more valuable now that their number was so diminished; but their chagrin was doubly heightened when they came to see the enemy who had cost them so dear. Instead of being well made and muscular, like the most of the natives, he was small, lank, and diminutive, giving no promise in his form of the valor of his spirit. Cursing their misfortune, and the wilfulness of Francisco, which had caused it, they set forward with their companions to rejoin the army.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Part ii. Lib. v. c. 5 and 6

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THEY PASS THROUGH THE PROVINCE OF CHAGUATE, AND MOSCOSO DISPATCHES A PARTY OF TWELVE TROOPERS AFTER DIEGO DE GUZMAN—SUFFERINGS OF THE ARMY—THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE PROVINCE OF ANILCO, AND THEIR DESPONDENCY—CHEERED UP BY NEWS OF THE FERTILE COUNTRY OF AMINOYA—ANASCO DISPATCHED TO THAT PROVINCE, AND WHAT HE FOUND THERE.

1542.

With similar adventures and disasters did the Spaniards continue their weary journey. Fearful of making too great a bend to the south, and of striking the Mississippi below the province of Guachoya, which was the point where they wished to arrive, they now inclined to the northeast, so as to strike the track they had made on their western course.

This led them back through the province of Naguatex, where they found the villages which they had burnt already rebuilt, and the houses well stocked with maize. In this province the natives made earthen ware of a very tolerable quality.

In passing through the province of Chaguate, the governor bethought him of the Spanish cavalier, Diego de Guzman, who had taken refuge among the Indians, and sent twelve troopers in search of him; but he had notice of their approach from the In-

dian spies, and concealed himself. The army, in the mean time, were suffering from scarcity of food, so that the governor, seeing that Guzman was bent upon remaining among his Indian friends, gave up all further search for him, and proceeded on his march.*

The winter was now set in with great rigor, with heavy rains, violent gales, and extreme cold: yet in their eagerness to arrive at their destined place of repose, they continued to press forward in all weathers, travelling all day, and arriving at nightfall, drenched with rain, and covered with mud, at their place of encampment. They had then to sally out in quest of food, and most of the time were compelled to gain it by force of arms, and sometimes at the expense of many lives.

The rivers became swollen by the rain; even the brooks were no longer fordable, so that almost every day they were obliged to make rafts to cross them; and at some of the rivers they were detained seven or eight days, by the unceasing opposition of their enemies, and the want of sufficient materials for constructing the rafts. Often, too, at night they had no place whereon to lie, the ground being covered with mud and water. The cavalry passed the night sitting upon their horses, and as to the infantry, with the water up to their knees, their situation may easily be conceived. For clothing, too, they had merely jackets of chamois and other skins, belted round them, serving for shirt, doublet, and coat, and almost always soaking wet; they were in general bare-legged, without shoes or sandals.

With these continual sufferings, both men and horses began to sicken and die. Every day two, three, and at one time seven Spaniards fell victims to the hardships of the journey, and almost all the Indian servants perished. There were no means of carry-

* Portuguese Relation, c. 35

ing the sick and dying, for many of the horses were infirm, and those that were well, were reserved to repel the constant attacks of the enemy. The sick and exhausted, therefore, dragged their steps forward as long as they could, and often died by the way, while the survivors, in their haste to press onward, scarce paused to give them sepulture, leaving them half covered with earth, and sometimes entirely unburied. Yet, notwithstanding this sickness and exhaustion, they never failed to post sentinels, and keep up their camp guard at night, to prevent their being surprised and massacred.

At length they arrived at the fertile province of Anilco, the cacique of which had experienced such rough treatment from them, and their savage ally, Guachoya, on their previous visit. They had been, for some time past, cheering themselves during their famished march with the prospect of solacing themselves in this province, which abounded in maize, and of procuring a sufficient supply to sustain them during the time necessary for the construction of their vessels. To their bitter disappointment, however, they found the province of Anilco almost destitute of maize; and had the additional chagrin of knowing that they were the cause of this scarcity. The hostilities they had waged with Anilco, during their residence at Guachoya, had deterred the inhabitants from cultivating their lands; thus seed-time passed unimproved, and the year had produced no harvest.

Many of the Spaniards, worn out by past trials, could not stand this new disappointment, but gave way to despair. Without a supply of maize, it would be impossible to subsist through the winter, or to sustain the daily and protracted toils of building the vessels for their departure. Their imaginations magnified the difficulties before them, and painted every thing in dark

colors. How were they to build vessels fitted to stand a sea voyage, destitute as they were of pitch and tar, of sails and cordage? How were they to navigate without map, or sea-chart, or pilot?—How were they to ascertain at what place the great river on which they were to embark disembogued itself into the ocean? Sorely did they lament their having returned from the far west, and given up their project of reaching New Spain by land. As to the plan of escaping by sea, nothing, said they, but a miracle would enable them to carry it into effect.

Such were the despondings of many of the Spaniards; and, indeed, a general gloom prevailed through the camp, when they were again encouraged by intelligence derived from some of the Indians of Anilco. They told them that at the distance of two days' journey, on the banks of the Mississippi, there were two towns near to each other, in the country of Aminoya, a region of exuberant fertility; in these they would probably find maize, and other provisions, in abundance.

On receiving this cheering intelligence, the governor immediately detached Juan de Añasco, with a strong party of horse and foot, to visit these places.* They were accompanied by many of the Indians of Anilco, who were at war with those of Aminoya. After a hard march of two days, they came to the towns, which were situated close together, in an open champaign country, and surrounded by a creek or ditch, filled with water from the Mississippi, so as to form an island.

De Añasco entered the villages without opposition, the inhabitants having fled on their approach. To the great joy of the Spaniards, the houses were abundantly stocked with maize, and other grain; vegetables, nuts, acorns, and dried fruits, such as

* Portuguese Relation, c. 35.

grapes and plums. In one of the houses they found an old woman, who was too infirm to make her escape. She asked them why they came to that village. They replied, to winter there. The old beldame shook her head, and told them that was no place for winter quarters. Every fourteen years, she said, there was an uncommon rise of the great river, so as to inundate all the surrounding country, and compel the inhabitants to take refuge in the upper part of their houses. This, she added, was the fourteenth year, and an inundation was to be expected. The Spaniards, however, made light of her warning, considering it an old wives' fable, without reflecting that ancient residents of the kind are the chronicles of local fact.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THE SPANIARDS ARRIVE AT AMINOYA—COMMENCE BUILDING BRIGANTINES—QUARREL BETWEEN THE CACIQUE, GUACHOYA, AND THE CAPTAIN GENERAL OF ANILCO—SINGULAR CHALLENGE OF THE LATTER.

1542.

HAVING fixed himself in one of the towns, De Añasco sent advices to the governor of his success, and of the abundance that prevailed around him. Moscoso immediately set off with the residue of the army to join him. Notwithstanding their prospect of speedy repose and good quarters, this was as hard a march as any the troops had experienced. Enfeebled by sickness and famine, they had to traverse several swamps, in a drenching storm of rain, and a bitter north wind.

The hearts of the poor way-worn Spaniards leaped within them when they once more came in sight of the Mississippi, for they regarded it as the highway by which they were to escape out of this land of disaster. They entered the village of Aminoya, as a haven of repose, and thanked God that they had at length reached a spot where they might rest a while from their wayfaring. Indeed, had they not found, at this juncture, a place of abundance, it is probable most of them would have perished under the rigors and privations of the winter. As it was, many

of them but gained this place of rest to die. The excitement of the march had stimulated them beyond their strength; when no longer exertion was necessary, they fell into sickness and lethargy, and in the course of a few days above fifty of them expired.

Among those who had thus survived the toils and perils of the march, to perish in the place of refuge, was Andres de Vasconcellos, a Portuguese cavalier of noble blood, who had distinguished himself on various occasions in the course of this fatal enterprise.

No one, however, was more lamented by the army than the brave and generous Nuño Tobar, a cavalier no less valiant and noble than unfortunate. Having had the ill luck, at the outset of the enterprise, through an error of love, to displease the governor De Soto, he had never been forgiven, although he had repaired his wrong to the lady by marriage, and atoned to his commander by repeated acts of chivalrous bravery. On the contrary, he had ever been treated by De Soto with a rigor and disdain, from which his great merits and services should have shielded him; nor had he been restored to his military rank under that general's successor, Moscoso.

Seeing the favorable situation of the village of Aminoya, and the abundance of the surrounding country, the governor resolved to establish his winter quarters, and build his brigantines here.* It is true it was about sixteen leagues above the residence of Guachoya, where he had intended to winter, but that was immaterial; the grand object was attained, a secure place on the Mis

* Mr. McCulloch supposes the village of Aminoya to have been situated in the neighborhood of the present town of Helena, about thirty miles above the Arkansas.

sissippi for the construction of his vessels, and his proposed embarkation.

To render his position more comfortable and secure, he destroyed one of the two adjacent villages, and carried all its provisions, wood, and provender, to the other. This was surrounded by palisades, and he set about strengthening its defences, but such was the debilitated state of his men, that it cost him twenty days to accomplish the work. Being now, however, in good quarters, with plenty of food, and suffering no molestation from the natives, they soon began to recover from their fatigues and maladies, and, with the renovation of their strength, their spirits likewise revived.

They now set to work to construct seven brigantines, for the embarakation of all their force. They were built under the superintendence of Francisco, the Genoese, the same who had on various occasions been efficient in constructing bridges, rafts, and boats, being the only person in the army who knew any thing of ship-building. He was assisted by four or five carpenters, of Biscay. Another Genoese and a Catalonian, skilled, as their countrymen usually are, in nautical affairs, engaged to calk the vessels.

A Portuguese, who had been a slave among the Moors of Fez, had learned the use of the saw, and instructed some of the soldiers in the art. He was to reduce the timber felled in the neighboring forests into suitable planks; while a cooper, who was almost at death's door, promised, as soon as he was able to work, to make water-casks for the vessels.

All the iron work treasured up from former embarkations was now brought forth, and every article of iron that could be spared from other purposes. The chains were knocked off the

Indian captives, even the iron stirrups of the troopers were given up, and wooden ones substituted in their place. A forge was erected to work up these materials into the necessary forms, and thus the whole undertaking soon began to wear an encouraging aspect.

Assistance was also rendered from other quarters. The old friend and ally of the Spaniards, Guachoya, hearing of their return, came with presents of provisions, and renewed his former intercourse. The cacique Anilco also, taught by the severe treatment he had brought upon himself by former hostility, now sent his captain general, with a numerous retinue, entreating the friendship of the governor, and pleading ill health as an excuse for his not coming in person. The captain general was received with great ceremony and respect; he was shrewd and intelligent, and acquitted himself with great address in his intercourse with the Spaniards. He mingled among them familiarly, acquainted himself with their plans and wishes, and transmitted an account of every thing to his cacique, who immediately contributed every assistance in his power. Every day or two came supplies from Anilco of fish and other provisions, together with various materials for the ships, such as cordage of various sizes, made of grass and fibrous plants, and mantles made of an herb resembling the mallows, containing a fibre like flax, which the Indians wrought into thread, and dyed with various colors.

Guachoya emulated Anilco in supplying the various wants of the Spaniards, but fell short of him in constant assiduity. Both caciques furnished numbers of their subjects to serve in the camp, and to do the rough work about the ships.

To carry on their ship-building without interruption from storms and inundations, the Spaniards erected four large frame

buildings. Within these both officers and men toiled without distinction, sawing planks, twisting cordage, making oars, and hammering out iron, and their only pride was shown in striving who should do the most work.

The cordage furnished by Anilco was fabricated into rigging and cables, and when this was not sufficient, the rinds of mulberry-trees were substituted. The Indian mantles, when sound and entire, were formed into sails; the old ones were picked into shreds to calk the vessels. For this latter purpose, also, use was made of an herb resembling hemp, called Enequen; and in place of tar the seams were payed with the rosin and gum of various trees, and with an unctuous kind of earth.

During the whole winter the captain general of Anilco was continually with the Spaniards, officiating as the representative of his cacique, mingling in all their concerns, administering to their wants, and seemingly taking as much interest in their plans as if they had been his own. His important services, and the hearty good will with which they were rendered, made him so popular with both officers and soldiers, that he received, on all occasions, such honors as would have been paid to his cacique.

All this awakened the jealousy and anger of Guachoya. He had secretly sought to revive the former hostilities between the Spaniards and Anilco, but his intrigues had been in vain. His spleen at length broke forth, in presence of the governor and his officers, on the occasion of some new honors which they paid to the captain general. He represented the latter as a mere servant and vassal, base in his origin, poor in his circumstances, and remonstrated with the Spaniards for paying more honors to a man of such condition, than to a powerful chieftain.

The general of Anilco listened with a calm, unchanging coun-

tenance until he had finished, then, asking permission of the governor, he replied with generous warmth, showing his honorable descent from the same ancestors as his cacique, and his high standing, as second only to his chieftain, and commander of his forces. He reminded Guachoya of victories which he had gained over his father, himself, and his brothers, all of whom he had, at different times, had in his power and treated magnanimously; finally, as a mortal trial of prowess, he defied Guachoya to enter alone with him into a canoe, and launch themselves on the Mississippi. The abode of Guachoya lay several leagues down the river, that of the general of Anilco up the tributary stream which entered into the Mississippi. He who should survive the mortal struggle of the voyage, and navigate the canoe to his home, would be the undisputed victor.

The captain general of Anilco concluded his warm and indignant speech, but Guachoya neither accepted the challenge nor answered a word, but remained with confused and downcast countenance. From that time forward the general was held in higher estimation than ever by the cavaliers and the army in general.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. v. P. ii. c. 10.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THE LEAGUE OF THE CACIQUES AGAINST THE SPANIARDS—GONZALO SILVESTRE ROUGHLY HANDLES AN INDIAN—HOW THE DESIGNS OF THE HOSTILE CACIQUES WERE FRUSTRATED.

1543.

While the Spaniards were diligently employed building their brigantines, the natives of the surrounding provinces were plotting their destruction. On the opposite side of the Mississippi, a few leagues below Aminoya, extended the vast, fruitful, and populous province of Quigualtanqui; the same province which had been visited by a scouting party, sent by Hernando De Soto, during his sojourn at Guachoya; on which occasion, the reader may recollect, taunting messages were sent by the cacique to the governor. The cacique of Quigualtanque was young and warlike; beloved throughout his extensive dominions, and feared by his neighbors on account of his great power.

Retaining his former enmity to the Spaniards, he learnt with alarm that they were again in his neighborhood, and building great barks, which might give them command of the river, or enable them to leave the country, and return in greater force to conquer it. He sent envoys, therefore, among the neighboring

caciques on both sides of the river, and a league was formed to combine their forces at a certain time, for a general assault upon the Spaniards.

The cacique of Anilco was invited to enter into the league, but he remained true to the Spaniards, and sent the governor secret intelligence of the conspiracy. Moscoso ordered additional guards to be stationed about the camp, and patrols kept up by night and day, and vigilant watch to be maintained over the places where the arms and munitions of war were deposited. In the mean time, envoys arrived at all hours of the day and night from the cacique of Quigualtanqui and his allies, bringing messages of friendship, accompanied by presents. The governor perceived, by their roving about the camp, and taking note of every thing, that they were mere spies. He gave peremptory orders, therefore, that no Indian should come by night to the village; but his mandates were disregarded.

One night, Gonzalo Silvestre, with a comrade, was on duty as sentry at one of the gates of the village. He was just recovering from a severe illness, and was yet feeble. About the mid-watch, he descried in the clear moonlight two Indians approaching, with bows and arrows in their hands, and lofty plumes on their heads. They advanced towards the gate across a fallen tree, which served as a bridge over the fosse. Silvestre, who knew the peremptory orders of the governor, and the lurking treachery which surrounded them, felt his blood boil at sight of these interlopers. "Here come two Indians," said he to his comrade; how dare they come at night, in defiance of the prohibition of the governor? By the mass, the first that enters this gate shall feel the edge of my sword"

His comrade begged him to leave the Indian to him, as he

was strong and well, and Silvestre but feeble in health. "By no means," replied the other; "I am strong enough to give these impudent savages a lesson."

The Indian drew nigh, and finding the gate open, entered without hesitation. In an instant, Silvestre gave the foremost a blow in the face with his sword, and felled him to the ground. The savage recovered himself, snatched up his bow and arrows, and plunging into the fosse, swam to the other side. His companion fled across the fallen tree, and leaping into his canoe, made the best of his way across the Mississippi.

At sunrise, four Indian warriors appeared at the camp, complaining in the name of all the neighboring caciques of this violation of the peace existing between them, and demanding that, as the wounded Indian was a warrior of rank, the soldier who struck him should be put to death. Embassies of the kind were repeated at noon, and in the evening, the latter announcing that the warrior had died of his wound.

Luis de Moscoso gave evasive and haughty replies to the ambassadors, which greatly incensed the chieftains of the league. They concealed their rage and hatred, however, consoling themselves with the idea that the day of vengeance was at hand. In the mean time, each cacique assembled his warriors, and prepared for the signal blow. Their plan was to burst suddenly upon the Spaniards, and massacre every one of them. Should they fail in this, they were to set fire to the hulks of the vessels, and thus prevent their departure. They might then exterminate them by degrees; for they were aware of their diminished numbers, and that but few horses survived—these objects of their chief terror —above all, they knew that the brave Hernando de Soto was no more.

The Spaniards were aware that the momentous day was near at hand: for some of the spies who visited the camp had comforted the Indian captives with assurances of speedy deliverance and revenge; all which the Indian women had revealed to their masters. Added to this, as the nights were still and serene, they would hear the murmuring sound of Indian gatherings on both sides of the river, and could see the camp fires gleaming in different directions.

When this storm of war was about to burst upon the Spaniards, there came on a sudden rising of the river. The prediction of the old Indian woman was verified Although there had been no fall of rain for a month, yet the Mississippi, in the month of March, swelled above its banks, and inundated the country for several leagues on both sides of the river. The green fields and forests were transformed into a broad sea, with the branches and tops of the trees rising above the surface, and canoes gliding between them in every direction. The town in which the army was quartered was on a rising ground, yet the water rose in the lower parts of the houses, and obliged the troops to take refuge in the garrets, or on sheds erected on strong piles. They had to quarter their horses in the same manner; and for some time it was impossible to go abroad, excepting in canoes, or on horseback, when the water would reach to the stirrups of the trooper. It was in consequence of these inundations, says the Spanish historian, that the Indians built their villages on high hills, or artificial mounds. The houses of the chieftains were often built upon piles, with upper floors, where they might take refuge from the freshets.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

THE CACIQUES OF THE LEAGUE AGAIN PREPARE TO ATTACK THE SPANIARDS—AN INDIAN SPY—A PLOT DETECTED.

1543.

The swelling of the Mississippi and inundation of the surrounding country, dispersed the hordes of savage warriors, and forced them to take refuge in their villages. The caciques, however, did not abandon their evil design, but kept up a semblance of friendship, sending repeated messages and presents. Moscoso ordered a vigilant watch to be kept about the village, and especially about the brigantines, permitting no Indians to come near them in their canoes, through fear of some treacherous design.

The swollen river subsided as slowly as it had risen, and it was two months before it shrunk within its natural channel. As soon as the surface of the country was sufficiently dry, the caciques again gathered their forces for their premeditated attack.

The General of Anilco gave the governor warning of their movements, and offered to bring a large force of Indians to assist him; but Moscoso declined his offer, lest his services should embroil the generous Anilco with his neighbors, after the departure of the Spaniards.

Anxious to procure particular information of the plans of the conspirators, Moscoso ordered an Indian, who was loitering about the town, and whom he suspected to be a spy, to be put to the rack. This is always a sure mode of forcing out round assertions, whether true or false. The Indian, under torture, declared that twenty caciques of the neighborhood were about to attack the camp with a large army: that to put him off his guard and conceal their treachery, they were to send a present of fish three days before the attack, and another present on the appointed day. That the Indians who brought the fish, combining with those who served in the camp, were to seize upon all lances and other weapons that were at hand, and set fire to the houses. At the sight of the flames, the caciques, with their troops, were to rush from the places where they lay in ambush, and assail the Spaniards on all sides, in the height of their confusion.

The governor, having heard the story, ordered the Indian to be kept in chains. On the day he had mentioned, thirty Indians came into the town, bearing presents of fish and messages of kindness. The governor immediately ordered them to be seized, taken aside separately, and examined concerning the conspiracy. They attempted no defence, but made full confession of the plot. Moscoso, with his usual rigor, ordered forthwith that their right hands should be cut off, and that they should be sent, thus mutilated, to their homes, to give warning to the caciques that their treachery was discovered. The stoical savages bore their punishment without flinching; scarce was the hand of one stricken off, when another laid his arm upon the block. Their patience and firmness extorted the pity and admiration even of their enemies.

This sanguinary punishment of their envoys put an end to the league of the caciques, who gave up their plan of attacking

the camp, and returned each one to his province, but with hearts bent on further hostility.

Guachoya had more than once been suspected by the Spaniards of secret participation in this plot, and had even been charged with it by the Indian spy, when under the torture. There does not appear to have been certain proof; and, indeed, all these stories of plots and conspiracies related by Indians of each other, are to be received with great distrust. The Spaniards, doubtless, were often deceived by their allies, who sought through their means, to cripple their rivals and antagonists; and much needless hostility and bloodshed did they bring upon themselves by some harsh measure, either to punish or prevent some imputed treason.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

FINAL PREPARATIONS OF MOSCOSO AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

1543.

Moscoso and his officers, convinced of their perilous situation thus surrounded by open and secret foes, applied themselves assiduously to complete their armament, and provide stores for the voyage. Guachoya, conscious of the late suspicions entertained of him, redoubled his zeal in furnishing maize, fish, and other supplies, and Anilco continued to the last his friendly offices. Throughout all their wanderings the Spaniards had preserved a number of the swine which they had brought with them to stock their intended settlement. These had, in fact, multiplied during the march, and others which had strayed away, or been given to the Indians, had likewise produced their increase. The Spaniards now killed those that remained with them, excepting a dozen and a half which they retained alive, in case they should yet form a settlement near the sea coast, and a few which they made presents to Anilco and Guachoya. The carcasses were then cut up and made into bacon for ships' provisions. Of fifty horses that remained, they determined that twenty of the least valuable should be killed and put up for provisions. This was a painful alternative, on account of their long companionship in wayfaring, and the faithful

services they had rendered. They were tied to stakes at night, a vein opened, and they were thus left to bleed to death. The flesh was then parboiled and dried in the sun, and laid up among the sea stores. Canoes were linked together, two and two, to convey the others, their fore feet being placed in one canoe and their hind feet in the other, and the canoes were barricaded with boards and hides to ward off the arrows of the Indians.

When the brigantines were ready for service, there was an unusual swelling of the river, so that the water reached the place where they were on the stocks, and they were launched with great ease. This was a fortunate circumstance, for they were built of such thin planks, and fastened with such short nails, that they might have bulged in being transported over land. They were merely large barks, open except at the bow and stern, where they had coverts to protect the sea stores. Along the gunwales were bulwarks of boards and hides, and boards were laid athwart them to serve as decks. They had seven oars on each side, at which all were to take their turns indiscriminately, excepting the captains. Each brigantine had two commanders, so that in emergencies, one might act on shore, while the other remained to govern on board.

The little squadron being now afloat and all ready for embarkation, the governor made his final arrangements on shore. Two days before his departure he took a kind farewell of Guachoya, and the captain general of Anilco, sending them both back to their homes, first making them promise to live in friendship with each other after he was gone. The next day he dismissed the greater part of the Indians, male and female, who had been in the service of the camp, retaining those only, of both sexes, who were of distant tribes and had followed the army in its wander-

ings. But a remnant survived, not above thirty, out of a multitude that had from time to time been captured and reduced to servitude, in the course of their extensive marchings. The rest had perished by degrees, in the various hardships to which they had been exposed. These survivors had, for the most part, become attached to the Spaniards, and moreover, dreaded to be left among the strange tribes, who might enslave and maltreat them.*

* The Portuguese Relation makes the number of Indians thus embarked, amount to one hundred. The number given by the Inca is most probable, both narratives having previously stated that most of the Indians who had followed the army in its last march perished before arriving at Aminoya.

CHAPTER XC.

EMBARKATION OF THE SPANIARDS UPON THE MISSISSIPPI—A GRAND AND CONCERTED ATTACK BY A LARGE FLEET OF CANOES, AND HOW THE SPANIARDS FARED—GONZALO SILVESTRE SENT ON SHORE WITH A DETACHMENT OF MEN FOR PROVISIONS—LOSS OF THEIR HORSES.

1543.

On the second day of July, the Spaniards embarked on board their seven brigantines. The largest one, named the Capitana, was commanded by Luis de Moscoso, as admiral of this little fleet. Of the numerous and brilliant host that had entered on this heroic but disastrous enterprise, not quite three hundred and fifty survived; and these in forlorn and wretched plight; their once brilliant armor battered, broken, and rusted; their rich and silken raiment reduced to rags, or replaced by the skins of wild beasts.

The sun was setting as they got under way, and the gloom of evening seemed an emblem of their darkening fortunes. They were abandoning the fruit of all their labor and hardships, the expected reward of their daring exploits, the land of their golden dreams. They were launching forth on a vast and unknown river, leading they knew not whither, and were to traverse, in

frail and rudely constructed barks, without chart or compass, great wastes of ocean, to which they were strangers, bordered by savage coasts, in the vague hope of reaching some Christian shore, on which they would land beggars!

With sail and oar they pursued their course all night, and on the following morning passed by the residence of Guachoya. Here they found many of the inhabitants waiting in their canoes to receive them, and beheld a rustic bower of branches of trees prepared for their reception. The governor, however, excused himself from landing, whereupon the Indians accompanied him in their canoes to where the river forked into two branches. They warned him that he was near the residence of Quigualtanqui, and offered to accompany him, and make war upon that cacique; but the governor, who desired nothing less than any hostile encounter with the natives, declined their offer, and dismissed them.

The little fleet continued its course by the main branch of the river, where there was a rapid current; and in the afternoon hauled to shore on the left bank, where the Spaniards passed the rest of the day in a spacious wood. At night they re-embarked, and continued their course. On the following day, they landed near a village which the Indians had abandoned, and took a woman prisoner, who informed them that the cacique of Quigualtanqui had assembled all his forces further down the river, and was waiting to attack them.

This intelligence put them on their guard, but made them ready to suspect hostilities, where perhaps they were not intended. They had not proceeded much farther down the river, when, as they were foraging on shore, and carrying off provisions wherever they found them, they perceived a number of canoes hovering on the opposite side of the river, and, as they thought, menacing hostili-

ties. The cross-bow men immediately leaped in the canoes that were astern of the brigantines, pushed across the river, and readily dispersed the savages. No sooner had the cross-bow men returned to the brigantines, and the latter got under weigh, than the light barks of the savages were again in sight; keeping ahead of the squadron, and drawing up near a village that stood on a high bank, they seemed disposed to make battle. The canoes were again manned, the Indians were once more dispersed, and the Spaniards landing, set fire to the village; after which, they encamped for the night in an open plain.

Whatever may have been the previous disposition and intentions of the Indians, they had now fair grounds for hostility; nor did they fail to wage it to the utmost. On the following morning, a powerful fleet of canoes was in sight, apparently the combined force of the hostile caciques. Some of them were of great size, with from fourteen to twenty-five paddles on a side, and carried from thirty to seventy warriors. They darted across the water with the speed of race horses.

The canoes of the caciques, and some of the principal warriors, were brilliantly painted, both within and without; the paddles, the rowers, and even the warriors themselves, from the feet to the scalping tuft, were painted of one color. Some were blue, others yellow or white, red, green, violet or black, according to the device or taste of the chieftain.

For that day, and part of the next, they followed the Spaniards without attacking them, keeping time in rowing by chanting wild songs of different cadences, short or long, slow or fast, according to the speed with which they desired to move, and closing each chant with a terrific and deafening yell, shouting the name of Quigualtanqui. The burthen of these wild war songs was the chiv-

alrous exploits of their ancestors, and the daring deeds of their chieftain, by recalling the memory of which, they roused themselves to battle. They proudly vaunted their own fearlessness and valor, while they taunted the Spaniards with cowardice in flying from their arms, and threatened to overthrow them, and make them food for fishes.

About noon of the second day, there was a movement among the fleet of canoes. They separated into three different divisions, forming a van, centre, and rear, and approached the right bank of the river. The canoes in the van then darted forward, glided along to the right of the brigantines, and crossing the river obliquely, discharged a shower of arrows, which wounded many Spaniards, in spite of their shields and bulwarks. They then wheeled round, and recrossing the river in front of the brigantines, stationed themselves on the right bank. The second squadron, composing the centre of the fleet, performed the same manœuvre, and having discharged their arrows, recrossed the river, and stationed themselves in front of the van. The rear did likewise, and then took up their position in front of all.

As the caravels advanced, the Indians repeated their attack after the same manner, always returning to the right bank of the river. In this manner the savages battled with the Spaniards all the day long, never giving them a moment's rest, and breaking their repose during the night by incessant alarms.

When the Spaniards were first attacked, they manned the canoes in which the horses were, for the purpose of protecting them, as they expected to combat hand to hand with the savages. Perceiving, however, the intention of the enemy to fight at a distance, and gall them with their arrows, and finding themselves exposed to their fire, they returned to the brigantines, leaving

the horses with no other defence save the skins of animals thrown over them.

In these contests, the Spaniards had to return the enemy's fire from their cross-bows, for their arquebuses had never been of use since the destruction of their gunpowder, at the conflagration of Mauvila, and they had been wrought up with other articles into iron work for the brigantines. They sought not, however, to make offensive war, but merely to keep the enemy at bay, while the rowers plied their oars; and they sheltered themselves as well as they were able, with buffalo skins, and shields made of double mats, through which an arrow could not penetrate.

This harassing warfare continued for several days and nights, until most of the Spaniards were wounded, and all were worn out with fatigue and watching, and with the weight of their armor. Of the horses, also, only eight remained alive. The Indians, at length, desisted from their attacks, and hovered at the distance of half a league.

The Governor, imagining they had given over all further hostilities, and supposing that the sea could be at no great distance ahead, was desirous of procuring a fresh supply of provisions. Observing a small village on the banks of the river, he sent Gonzalo Silvestre on shore with a hundred men and the eight horses, to seek supplies. The inhabitants of the village fled with loud yells at the approach of such strange people, and strange animals. Silvestre found abundance of maize and dried fruits, with skins of different animals, and among the rest, a martin skin, decorated with strings of pearl, which appeared to have been used as a banner. While he and his party were making plunder of every thing in their way, they heard the trumpet clamorously sounding their recall. Hurrying to the river bank, they beheld a fleet of canoes

pulling towards them with all speed, while a band of Indians were running to cut them off by land. Springing into their canoes, they pulled with desperate exertions to the brigantines, abandoning the horses to their fate. The Indians turned to vent their fury upon the latter. The gallant animals defended themselves by kicking and plunging; some of the savages were so frightened at what they took for ferocious beasts, that they leaped into the water; the rest, however, hunted the poor horses like so many deer, transfixed them with their arrows, and made an end of them.

Thus miserably perished the remnant of the three hundred and fifty noble steeds, that had entered Florida in such gorgeous array. As the Spaniards beheld these generous and faithful animals slaughtered before their eyes, without being able to aid them, they sorrowed deeply, and shed tears for them as though they had been their own children.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. vi. c. 5. Portuguese Relation, c. 38.

CHAPTER XCI.

CONTINUATION OF THE VOYAGE DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI—THE FOOLHARDY EXPLOIT OF ESTEVAN AÑEZ—THE FEAT OF PEDRO MORON, THE HALF-BREED—UNCERTAIN FATE OF DE GUZMAN.

1543.

The Indians continued to follow at some distance in the rear of the Spaniards, attacking any of their vessels that lagged behind, until the sixteenth day of this harassing voyage.

On board of one of the brigantines was a soldier named Estevan Añez. He was of low birth, but had joined the expedition as a trooper. His steed, though of sorry appearance, had proved tough and strong, and was among the last that perished. Owing to his being mounted, Añez had been engaged in some of the most perilous service of the expedition, and though he had never performed any thing of note, had gained the reputation of a gallant man. This, added to his natural rusticity and narrow spirit, had rendered him weak and vainglorious. This day he got into the canoe, attached to the stern of the brigantine, under pretence of going to speak with the governor, but in reality on a hare-brained project. He enticed with him five young cavaliers of buoyant spirits and daring valor, promising them some brilliant exploit. One of them, Carlos Enriquez, scarce twenty years

of age, graceful in form, and with a countenance of surpassing beauty, was the natural son of Don Carlos Enriquez, who fell bravely fighting in the battle of Mauvila.

Estevan Añez, with these five gallant young cavaliers, pulled directly for the Indian fleet that stretched across the river in the rear. The governor witnessing this mad freak, ordered the trumpets to sound a recall. The captains of the brigantines likewise shouted and made signs to them to return. The louder they shouted the more obstinate and vainglorious grew Estevan Añez, and instead of returning he made signs for the brigantines to follow him. When Luis de Moscoso beheld the stubbornness of this madman, he dispatched forty-six Spaniards in three canoes after him, vowing to hang him the moment he should be brought back. Juan de Guzman, the commander of one of the brigantines, was the first to leap into the canoe, followed by his friend Juan de Vargas. Guzman prided himself upon his skill in managing a canoe, and resisted the entreaties of his friends that he would remain in the brigantine.

The savages perceiving their approach, made a retrograde movement, for the purpose of leading them away from the brigantines, which, having furled their sails, were pulling slowly against the current to reinforce their comrades. Estevan Añez, however, being blinded by his sottish vanity, instead of mistrusting their designs, was deceived by this stratagem, and pulled with redoubled might towards them, crying, "they fly! they fly! at them! at them!" The other three canoes increased their efforts likewise, hoping either to detain him or lend him succor.

The Indians allowed their foes to draw nigh, then altered the disposition of their forces, the centre retreating, so as to form a half moon, and thus luring the Christians into the midst of them

They then assailed them furiously in front and flank. Some leaped into the water and overturned the canoes of the Spaniards, many of whom were carried down by the weight of their armor and drowned. Some who kept themselves up by swimming were shot with arrows, or struck over the head with paddles, and others who clung to the overturned canoes were beaten off. In this manner, without being able to make the least defence, forty-eight Spaniards miserably perished. Four alone escaped. One was Pedro Moron, the half-breed, who was an expert swimmer, and exceedingly skilful in the management of a canoe; he had fallen in the river, but with great dexterity and strength recovered his bark and made his escape, bearing off with him three other soldiers. One of them, named Alvaro Nieto, battled alone and kept the savages at bay, whilst Pedro Moron guided the canoe; but neither the prowess and valor of the one, nor the dexterity and skill of the other, would have availed them aught, had not the brigantine of Juan de Guzman fortunately been near. This bark was in advance of the rest, the crew having made greater exertion, aware that their much loved leader was in the midst of the affray; thus they rescued four of their comrades. Another Spaniard, Juan Terron, reached the brigantine, but as his companions were raising him out of the water, he breathed his last in their arms, being pierced with more than fifty wounds. The survivors asserted that they had seen the gallant De Guzman borne off by the Indians in one of their canoes, but whether dead or alive they could not tell.

Luis de Moscoso once again arranged his fleet in order, and resumed his eventful voyage, deeply lamenting the loss of these generous and valiant cavaliers.

This was the last assault of the savages for they seemed satis-

fied with this signal blow. All the rest of the day, and during the doleful night that succeeded, they kept up continual shouts and yells of triumph. When the sun rose on the following day they appeared to worship him and to return thanks for their victory, then raising a deafening din of voices, mingled with the sound of trumpets, shells, and drums, they turned their prows up the river and departed for their homes.

CHAPTER XCII.

THE SPANIARDS REACH THE OCEAN—DISEMBARK ON AN ISLAND OF DRIFT-WOOD—FIERCE ENCOUNTER WITH THE NATIVES OF THE COAST—THEY ANCHOR OFF AN UNINHABITED ISLAND.

1543.

THE poor harassed Spaniards once more began to breathe, when they saw their cruel enemies depart. They now cast about their thoughts as to their position. The river had expanded until it was several leagues in breadth, so that, when in the midst, they could not descry firm land on either side; nothing was to be seen but a border of swamp or marsh, with tall reeds, that looked like forests at a distance. The departure of the Indians led them to conjecture that the sea was near at hand. Keeping the centre of the current, therefore, lest they should wander into some deep bay, they continued onward, with sail and oar and favoring breeze, until on the twentieth day, a broad expanse of water opened before them. On their left lay a large island, formed by vast quantities of drift-wood, swept down the river and piled up by the waves. About a league further was an uninhabited island, such as is often found at the mouths of great rivers, formed by alluvial deposits. The Spaniards were convinced by these signs, that they had reached the mouth of the river, and that the boundless ocean lay before them.

They now steered for the island of drift-wood, and found a

secure harbor for their brigantines; for they could lay them along side of the floating masses of timber, which rose and fell with the tide, and, fastening them to trunks of huge trees which lay imbedded there, leave them as secure as if at a pier head. Here, then, they landed, and overhauled their vessels, to repair any damage that they might have sustained, and to fit them for the buffetings of the ocean. Others killed the few hogs that yet remained alive, and made them into bacon. These labors, however, required but little time; the great object in landing on the island was repose; and so exhausted were they from the constant watchfulness they had been obliged to sustain for three weeks past, that during three days they did little else than sleep; and that so profoundly, that they lay about like so many dead bodies.

About noon on the third day, they were roused from their repose by the appearance of enemies. Seven canoes issued from among reeds and rushes, and approaching within hail, a gigantic Indian, black as an Ethiopian, either from paint or natural complexion, stood up in the prow of the foremost, and addressed them in a thundering voice. After a brief harangue, accompanied by menacing looks and gestures, he turned his prow, and, followed by his companions, shot back again among the rushes; where, from time to time, other canoes were perceived gliding about as if in ambush.

On the words of this black warrior being explained, as they were partially understood by the Indian domestics, they proved to be insulting epithets, and threats of hostility. The governor feared they might put their threats into execution, and attempt to surprise him in the night, and burn his vessels; he determined therefore to be beforehand with them, and strike the first blow. He accordingly detached a party of picked men, in five canoes, to beat up

the cane-brake. Among them were twenty-two cross-bow men and three archers. One of these archers was an Englishman by birth; another had lived in England from his boyhood until his twenty-eighth year, and had acquired there his skill with the long-bow and the cloth-yard arrow, for which the English were renowned. Throughout the expedition these two archers had used no other weapon, and had been noted for their deadly aim. The third archer was an Indian, servant of the gallant Juan de Guzman, who had fallen in the late battle, whom he had served faithfully on all occasions, with bow and arrow, since his first landing in Florida.

The detachment was commanded by Gonzalo Silvestre and Alvaro Nieto. They discovered the canoes of the enemy drawn up in battle array among the rushes, in formidable numbers. The savages waited until they were within bow-shot, when, having let fly a cloud of arrows that wounded several soldiers, they swept in among the rushes, and came to a second stand. In this way, they fired and wheeled about, and came again to the charge like so many horsemen. The cross-bow men and the three archers kept up a well directed fire, and galled the Indians excessively; at length the Spaniards were able to come to close quarters, overturned three of the canoes of the enemy, killed several of the crew, and put the whole armament to flight. They however came out of this affray very roughly handled; most of them were wounded, and among the number, the two commanders.

Fearing an attack in the night, and that fire might be set to the vessels, the governor embarked all the forces and made sail for the uninhabited island, under the lea of which he anchored, in forty fathoms of water. All that night the Spaniards slept on their arms, on board of their vessels, ready for action; the enemy, however, offered no further molestation.

CHAPTER XCIII.

A COUNCIL OF OFFICERS CALLED TO DETERMINE UPON THEIR FUTURE COURSE—THEY SET SAIL—ANASCO PREVAILS UPON THEM TO FOLLOW HIS ADVICE.

1543.

When the day dawned, the governor called a council of his officers to determine what course to steer. To attempt to cross to Cuba or Hispaniola was considered entirely out of the question: as they knew not in what quarter to seek them, nor were they provided with nautical instruments necessary for such a voyage: it was determined, therefore, to make for the coast of Mexico, or New Spain: in seeking which, they would have the land always on their right, to resort to as occasion required.

Juan de Añasco now stood forth with his usual bustling zeal, whenever any important measure was to be adopted. He piqued himself much on his knowledge of maritime affairs, as he did upon various other kinds of knowledge, and declared that, according to maps which he had seen, the coast from the place where he supposed them to be, bore east and west to the river of Palms, and from that river to New Spain it ran north and south, making a complete bend or gulf. He advised, therefore, that they should put out to sea in a south-west direction, so as to steer across the gulf; by this route they might reach the Mexican shores in ten

or twelve days, whereas, if they kept near the land, and followed the windings of the coast, the voyage would necessarily be prolonged, and they might be overtaken by winter before they could reach a Christian country. To illustrate his ideas, he drew a rough sea-chart, according to his notions of the coast, upon a piece of parchment, made from a deer's skin; he also produced an old astrolabe, which, being of metal, had escaped the conflagration at Mauvila, and which he had preserved with curious care; and a forestaff, which he had made from a carpenter's rule; with these to take observations and to steer by, he offered to pilot the squadron across the gulf, to the shores of New Spain.

The governor was at first inclined to adopt this council, especially as it was concurred in by some of the officers. The majority, however, opposed it; partly through doubts of the nautical knowledge of Juan de Añasco, who they knew had but little practical experience; partly, perhaps, from jealousy of the lead so often given to him in services of moment, but chiefly because of the real dangers of his proposition. They argued, that the brigantines, being so slightly built, and without decks, would be in danger of foundering in the least storm. That their peril would be almost equally great on the high sea, in calms or head winds, from the want of fresh water, having so few casks to put it in. And that it would be the height of rashness to attempt to cross a vast and unknown gulf without a compass to steer by, and an experienced pilot to direct them. They concluded, therefore, that, though it might be the slower, it would be the far surer course to keep along the coast, where they could land occasionally for supplies, and take refuge in creeks, and bays, and river mouths, in case of tempestuous weather. This council finally prevailed, much to the chagrin of Juan de Añasco.

Orders were now given to make sail, when, as they were weighing anchor, the cable of the governor's brigantine parted. Unfortunately, there was no buoy to mark the place, and the water was extremely deep For six hours the most expert divers were employed in search of it, but in vain: so they had to supply its place with a heavy stone, and the bits from the troopers' bridles, to increase the weight.

It was not until three o'clock in the afternoon that they made sail. The governor took the lead, and close to his brigantine was that commanded by De Añasco. They kept on for two or three leagues into the broad sea, when the captains of the other vessels bore up, and, hailing the governor, demanded whether he intended to quit the shore, contrary to the resolution of the council; declaring that if he did so, they would abandon him, and take each one his own course.

Moscoso replied, that he did but stand to sea to sail with more security during the night, but that he would return to the coast in the day time. All that night, and the next day, they kept on with a fair wind, and, to their surprise, in fresh water, owing to the immense quantity disembogued by the Mississippi. About nightfall, they anchored at a small rocky island, that they might take a little repose.

Here the zealous Juan de Añasco again produced his deer-skin chart, and inveighed against the loss of time and labor in thus creeping pusillanimously along the shore, instead of standing boldly across the gulf. His arguments at length prevailed, and, on the following morning, with one consent, they all stood out to sea. For two days the stout Juan de Añasco piloted them triumphantly with the aid of his astrolabe and forestaff, and frequent consultations of the deer-skin chart; at length the water

growing scanty, they felt inclined to stand toward to shore, but were met in the teeth by a contrary wind.

Two days did this wind continue, and kept them beating about in the high seas until their water was nearly expended. Bitterly now did they curse Juan de Añasco for giving his advice, and the governor for following it, and swore that if they once more got in with the land, they would keep along it, let Moscoso and his nautical counsellor take what course they pleased. On the fourth day, when they were at their last drop of water, the wind veered a little, and, plying every oar, they made for land. Those on board of the vessels who knew any thing of nautical matters now vented their spleen upon Juan de Añasco as a meddling pretender, who had never been at sea before this expedition, and knew nothing of maritime affairs; and the common soldiers made merry at the expense of his astrolabe and deer-skin chart. This coming to the ears of the irritable Añasco, he flung his forestaff into the sea, with the chart, which was tied to it, and would have sent the astrolabe after them, but that prudence tempered his wrath. Fortunately, the forestaff and chart floated, and were picked up by the brigantines which followed, and Juan de Añasco was gradually pacified. He seems, in fact, to have been the person in the squadron who had the best notion of their situation and true course, and his idea of the run of the coast was in the main correct.

CHAPTER XCIV.

VESSELS IN DANGER OF STRANDING—COME TO SOME SMALL ISLANDS, WHERE THEY REPAIR THE BRIGANTINES—OVERTAKEN BY A VIOLENT GALE, AND TWO CARAVELS DRIVEN TO SEA—MUTINY OF JUAN GAYTAN'S CREW.

1543.

It was with much toil and difficulty that the Spaniards rowed to shore, where they landed on a sand beach without shelter. In the evening the wind freshened up directly from the south, and drove the vessels from their weak anchors, so that they were in danger of stranding. The crews were obliged to leap in the water, and bear up against them to keep them from bilging. When the wind had subsided, they dug pits in the sand, from which they procured fresh water enough to fill their casks. In this way they supplied themselves with water throughout the voyage, whenever there were no springs or streams at hand. After sailing about fifteen days, they came to four or five small islands, not far from the main land. Here they found innumerable quantities of sea-birds, that built their nests upon the sand, and so close together, that it was almost impossible to walk without treading upon them. The men landed, and returned to the vessels laden with eggs and young birds which were almost too fat to eat. Threading these islands, they coasted along until they came to a beautiful beach, free from rushes,

skirted by a grove of large trees, clear of bush, brake, or under wood. Here they found great quantities of that scum of the sea, called copeck, resembling pitch. They therefore remained here several days careening their brigantines on the beach, calking their seams, and paying them with this copeck, mixed with hog's-lard. While thus employed they were visited several times by a few of the natives, armed with bows and arrows, but pacific in their conduct, who brought maize to give in exchange for skins. Continuing their voyage, the Spaniards were exceedingly molested in some parts of the coast by clouds of mosquitoes, so virulent in their sting, that the faces of the men were swollen out of all shape, and it was necessary to stand by the rowers and drive off these pestilent insects from their heads as they labored at the oar.

When the weather was pleasant the men fished, while others went on shore and gathered shell-fish, for they were on short allowance, their pork being expended, and but little maize remaining. Some of the fish taken were of a very large size, one of which jerked with such violence as to pull the unwary fisherman into the water.

For fifty-three days did the Spaniards keep on along the coast, steering to the westward. A great part of the time, however, was expended in occasionally repairing the vessels, in fishing, and in sheltering themselves from rough weather. Juan de Añasco insisted that, from the distance they had come, they could not be far from the river of Palms, from which, as he had before represented, according to his recollections of the map he had seen, the coast bore from north to south. The fleet stood a little out to sea, and the next morning early they perceived palm-trees raising above the surface of the water at a distance, and observed

that the coast actually lay north and south. In the afternoon high mountains began to loom up afar off, the first they had seen on any part of the sea coast since their first landing at Espiritu Santo. The opinions of Juan de Añasco now rose in estimation, and it was concluded that they had passed the river of Palms in the night time. If so, they could not be above sixty leagues from the river of Panuco, in the neighborhood of Spanish settlements.

They had not proceeded far, however, when a violent gale rose from the north. Five of the brigantines, among them that of the governor, made for the land, the other two caravels, one under the command of the treasurer, Juan Gaytan, who, since the untimely death of De Guzman, had remained sole captain, and the other, commanded by Juan de Alvorado and Christoval Mosquera, not taking timely warning of the coming gale, stood off too far from the coast, and were consequently exposed all the night long to the fury of the tempest. The caravel of Juan Gaytan was at one time in imminent peril. A sudden flaw of wind struck her and wrenched the mast out of the beam in which it rested, and it was with the utmost difficulty they could again right it. When morning dawned, the gale, instead of lulling, as the mariners had predicted, raged with renewed violence. They observed the other five brigantines enter some river or creek, and anchor in safety: this stimulated them to redouble their efforts to reach their companions. It was all in vain, however, for the wind was exactly ahead, and by their fruitless struggles, they were several times in danger of foundering. Still, they persisted until the afternoon, when, convinced that they were toiling to no purpose, they bore off, and ran along the coast with the wind on the quarter, the billows all the while breaking over them, so that they were in the utmost danger of being swamped.

For six and twenty hours did this gale continue with unabated fury, during which time the Spaniards were struggling with the winds and waves, without a moment's repose, and scarcely tasting food. Just as the sun was going down, their was a cry of "land ahead!" A boy named Francisco, who was in the brigantine under the command of Juan de Alvorado and Francisco Mosquera, said to these captains, "Señores, I know this coast ahead, as I have visited it twice before, as cabin-boy of a ship; the dark land stretching along to the left is a rough and rock-bound coast, extending to the harbor of Vera Cruz. In all that distance there is neither port nor shelter, but it is studded with sharp pointed rocks, which, if we strike, all will be lost. The light-colored land turning off to the right is a soft sand beach, which we can attain ere nightfall; should the wind drive us upon those dark and gloomy shores, we have little chance of our lives!"

So soon as the vessels drew nigh to each other, the two captains warned Juan Gaytan and his crew of their danger. They immediately determined to shape their course for the white shore. But Juan Gaytan, who was a better treasurer than captain, opposed this measure, saying it was not well thus to lose a valuable bark. This exasperated the crew, who began to mutiny and murmur, "Is this vessel of more worth than our lives?" said they. "You presume upon your rank of royal treasurer. Did you cut wood, or make charcoal for the forges, or beat out the iron for the nails, or calk the vessel, or do any thing else? No! you excused yourself as an officer of the Emperor; pray, then, what do you lose if the brigantine is wrecked?"

Upon this the principal soldiers sat to work trimming the sails, and a Portuguese, named Domingos de Acosta, seized the helm, and turned the prow of the bark towards the desired shore. Af-

ter making several tacks, they struck upon the sand-beach, before the sun had set, and succeeded in unlading and hauling the vessel on dry land. The other brigantine effected a landing in a similar manner, and with like success.

CHAPTER XCV.

EXPEDITION OF GONZALO SILVESTRE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTRY—WHAT HAPPENED TO MOSCOSO AND THE REST OF THE FLEET—HOW THE SPANIARDS WERE RECEIVED BY THE INHABITANTS OF PANUCO.

1543.

THE crews of the two barks now assembled together to decide what was to be done. It was unanimously resolved to send messengers to seek the governor, and bear him tidings of their situation. But who would undertake this perilous journey? They would have to travel thirteen or fourteen leagues through an unknown land, ford rivers, and peradventure encounter enemies.

Gonzalo Quadrado Xaramillo and Francisco Muñzo undertook the task. Taking a small supply of provisions, and buckling on their shields and swords, they set forth at midnight on their hazardous errand.

Their comrades then returned to their brigantines, posted sentries, and slept until the following morning. No sooner was it light, than they chose three captains to set out, each with twenty men, to obtain information respecting the country. One party followed the coast to the north, another to the south, and the third, under Gonzalo Silvestre, struck in a westwardly direction to penetrate into the interior.

The two first named parties returned in a short time, one bringing a half dish of white porcelain, of Spanish manufacture, the other a broken porringer of painted earthenware. The rapture of their comrades is easier to be conceived than described at beholding these signs of the neighborhood of some Spanish settlement.

Gonzalo Silvestre and his band penetrated a little more than a quarter of a league, when, from a hillock, they beheld a beautiful lake of fresh water spread out before them, a half league in extent Upon its waters were several canoes, with Indians fishing. Fearing that these might see them, and spread the alarm, they struck into a wood that bordered the lake, and keeping silently on for a quarter of a league, they espied two Indians beneath a huge guava-tree, gathering the fruit. Dragging themselves along on the ground among the herbage until near at hand, they rose at the same time, and rushed to seize them. One of the Indians plunged into the lake, and escaped by swimming; the other they took prisoner. They made prize of two baskets of guavas, a Mexican turkey, two Spanish fowls, and some maize, and then pushed for the vessels.

On arriving at the sea-shore, they found their comrades joyfully examining the tokens of civilization found by the two captains. When, however, they beheld the articles brought by Silvestre and his party, they leaped and danced about like mad. At length a surgeon, who had formerly been in Mexico, asked the Indian the name of a pair of scissors he held in his hand. He immediately called it by its Spanish name. This convinced them that they were in the territory of Mexico, and so overjoyed were they that they embraced Silvestre and his men, and hoisting that captain upon their shoulders, bore him about the shore in triumph.

When this wild ebullition of joy was over, they inquired more particularly concerning the country They learnt that the river into which Luis de Moscoso, with the five brigantines, had taken refuge, was the Panuco; and that on its banks, twelve leagues above, stood a city of the same name. The Indian told them, moreover, that about a league off, lived a cacique, who could read and write, and had been educated by the priests.

These joyful tidings gladdened their hearts, and having feasted the Indian, and given him presents, they dispatched him to the Christian cacique, with a request that he would either bring or send a supply of ink and paper. He soon returned, and with him the cacique, followed by a train of eight Indians, laden with fowls, bread of maize, and various fruits and fish, together with paper and ink. The Spaniards immediately sent off an Indian with a letter to Moscoso, giving him an account of all that had happened, and requesting directions as to their future movements.

In the mean time, the governor, Moscoso, when with his five brigantines he took refuge in the river from the gale, beheld, to his great joy, several Indians on shore clothed in the Spanish fashion. Calling out to them in Spanish, he demanded in what country they were. The Indians answered in the same language that they were on the river of Panuco, and that the town was not fifteen leagues distant. Upon this the Spaniards leaped on shore, kissed the ground repeatedly, and throwing themselves on their knees, poured out their thanks to God.

They now made the best of their way to the town of Panuco, where, in a few days, they were rejoined by their shipwrecked comrades. Their first act on entering the town was to repair to the church, and offer up thanks to God for having preserved them

through so many perils and hardships. The burghers of the town crowded to the church to offer them assistance. The corregidor took Moscoso into his house as his guest; the others were quartered among the inhabitants.

The town was for the most part built of stone, and contained about seventy families, who lived simply but abundantly, the wealthiest not having above five hundred crowns of income. Many of the inhabitants, however, were courteous cavaliers, and all were touched with pity at beholding this forlorn remnant of the gallant armament, that had created such a noise on its outset from Cuba.

The survivors in fact were blackened, haggard, shrivelled, and half naked, being clad only with the skins of deer, buffaloes, bears, and other animals, so that, says the Spanish narrator, they looked more like wild beasts than human beings.

CHAPTER XCVI.

DISCONTENTS AND BROILS AMONG THE SOLDIERY—THEIR SUBSEQUENT FORTUNES.

1543.

The chief magistrate of Panuco dispatched a messenger forthwith to Don Antonio de Mendoza, the viceroy of Mexico, which city lay some seventy leagues distant, to apprise him that a small remnant of Hernando de Soto's army had returned from Florida. The viceroy sent word, without delay, that they should be shown every kindness and honor, and furnished with whatever was necessary for their journey, when sufficiently recovered from their fatigues. He accompanied his message with a supply of shirts and sandals, and also four mules laden with delicacies and medicines for the sick.

Luis de Moscoso and his men, while sojourning in this city had time to reflect upon the beautiful country they had abandoned and they began to draw comparisons between it and Panuco. They found that here the people were but indifferently circumstanced, having neither mines of gold nor silver, nor any other treasure. Their dress was mere garments of cotton; their only source of wealth the breeding of horses, and planting mulberry-trees. They now began to retrace in memory the beautiful pro

vinces they had discovered; their wild fertility and prodigal abundance; their capabilities for raising maize and grain and vegetables; their verdant meadows and rich pasturages; their vast tracts of woodland, watered by running streams, so well adapted to the raising of herds and flocks. But above all, they called to mind the treasures of pearls, which they had not appreciated, as each one had fancied himself lord of boundless domains.

Turning these things over in their minds, they began to murmur among themselves. "Could we not," said they, "have dwelt in Florida as these Spaniards live in Panuco? and had we remained and settled there, would we not have been more opulent than these our hosts? Is it well, that we should come and receive alms and hospitality from others poorer than ourselves, when we might have entertained all Spain? Is it just or creditable to our honor, that we, who might have been chieftains, have come to beg? Better far would it have been to have bravely perished there, than to live here in poverty!"

These murmurings and repinings produced violent discord among them. Their greatest rage, however, was against the officers of the royal revenue, and the captains and cavaliers, who, after the death of the governor Hernando de Soto, had insisted upon leaving Florida, and had obstinately forced Luis de Moscoso to undertake that long and disastrous journey to the province of Los Vaqueros, instead of sending two brigantines for reinforcements, as had been intended. Several affrays took place, in which blood was shed and some lives lost. The officers and cavaliers were fain to keep within doors, and the town was continually distracted by the broils between the soldiery.

The corregidor of Panuco, finding that this discord increased from day to day, sent word to the viceroy, Don Antonio de Men

doza, who ordered them to be sent immediately to Mexico, in bands of ten and twenty, and that care should be taken to separate those who were at variance, lest they should fight by the road.

In pursuance of this order, they left Panuco twenty-five days after their arrival there. The inhabitants along the road thronged to see them; eager to behold men who had survived such toils and endured such hardships. The fame of their great sufferings and daring exploits had spread throughout the land, and both Indians and Spaniards entertained them with great kindness and hospitality throughout their journey. When they arrived at the renowned city of Mexico, throngs of the citizens flocked out to receive them, and conducted them to their homes, where they feasted them and clothed them in sumptuous apparel. The viceroy treated the governor and his officers with distinguished attention, and extended his kindness to the humblest of their followers.

Some of the skins and furs which the army brought with them were highly prized in Mexico. A few strings of pearls, also, which remained among them, proved to be of immense value. The beautiful martin skins, however, were valued above all. Finding that men of wealth prized so highly what they had despised, their despondency increased; they brooded bitterly over their folly in abandoning a country which had cost them so dearly to discover, and where these valuable articles abounded. Discontented with themselves, they forgot their former companionship and brotherhood in arms, and again broke out into fierce and sanguinary brawls.

The viceroy, to console them, promised that, if they desired to return to Florida, he would himself undertake the conquest

of the country; in fact, he had an inclination for the enterprise, and offered employment and salaries to many of the officers and men, to occupy them whilst he should make preparations. Some accepted these appointments; but most of them, when put to the proof, shrunk from returning to a country where they had suffered so many hardships.

The enterprising spirit of the stout-hearted Juan de Añasco was somewhat broken by disappointment, and, disgusted with the new world, where he had squandered his fortune, he returned to Spain. Juan Gaytan, the treasurer, the brave Baltazar de Gallegos, the veteran Pedro Calderon, Alonso Romo de Cardeños, Arias Tinoco, and many others of less note, followed the example of De Añasco. Gomez Suarez de Figueroa returned home, to the estate of his father, the magnificent old cavalier, Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. Some entered into the priesthood: a few remained in New Spain, among whom was the governor, Luis de Moscoso de Alvorado, who married a relative, a woman of rank and riches in Mexico. The greatest number, however, went to seek their fortunes in Peru.

CHAPTER XCVII.

THE VOYAGES OF MALDONADO AND GOMEZ ARIAS IN SEARCH OF DE SOTO—DEATH OF DONA ISABEL DE BOBADILLA.

1543.

To close this eventful history, it only remains to give some account of the movements of the two generous and loyal cavaliers Diego Moldonado and Gomez Arias. The former, as we have before related, set sail from Espiritu Santo, for the Havana, with two brigantines, to visit Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, the wife of the governor Hernando de Soto; Gomez Arias having preceded him in a caravel. These two cavaliers were to procure vessels in Havana, load them with supplies of food and arms, and munitions of war, and sail for the port of Achusi in the course of the following autumn, where De Soto, after exploring the interior of Florida, was to meet them.

They accordingly joined each other in the Havana, and, having sent to all the adjacent islands an account of the discovery of Florida, purchased three vessels and freighted them with supplies, and also loaded down the two brigantines and the caravel in which they came. They could, moreover, have laden two other vessels; for the inhabitants of the islands, hearing such a favorable report of Florida, prompted by their own interest as well as

by their love for the governor, sent all the provisions they could gather together.

The two captains set sail, and reached in safety the port of Achusi; but not finding De Soto there, they separated and coasted in opposite directions, thinking it probable that he might have come out at some other place, either to the eastward or westward. They left signals in the trees and letters in the crevices of the bark, with statements of their intended movements the following summer, and after cruising about in vain until the winter set in, they returned dejected to the Havana. The subsequent summer of the year 1541, they re-visited the shores of Florida, running along the coast as far to the westward as Mexico, and a great distance to the eastward, but meeting with no success, they returned to the Havana on the approach of winter. Early the ensuing summer they again sailed for Florida, and after having consumed seven months in fruitless search, were compelled by the weather to return and winter in Cuba.

Determined, however, not to give up the search until they had discovered traces of De Soto, for they could not believe that every soul of the expedition had perished, as soon as the spring of 1543 opened, they once again put to sea. They cruised about all this summer, suffering grievous privations and excessive labor and about the middle of October arrived at Vera Cruz. Here they heard the melancholy account that the Spaniards had abandoned Florida, that only three hundred of the gallant army had escaped, and that the governor, Hernando de Soto, had perished in the country he sought to conquer. With these sad tidings the two faithful captains repaired to Havana, and imparted them to Doña Isabel de Bobadilla. During three long years she had been racked with anxiety for the safety of her husband, and now

came the news of the failure of his magnificent enterprise, the loss of his vast treasures, the ruin of his estate, the downfall of his house, and his own melancholy death. It was an overwhelming blow; Doña Isabel never held up her head from this time, but died soon after of a broken heart.

Such was the fruitless and tragical end of the vaunted conquest of Florida: one of the most splendid and chivalrous expeditions to the new world, and one of the most disastrous. Never had a more gallant train of youthful cavaliers embarked on a crusade beyond the ocean; never had adventurers embarked with lighter hearts, more fearless souls, or more sanguine expectations. Their vaunting preparations in the island of Cuba, and their triumphant landing on the shores of Florida, partake of the swelling spirit of the nation and the age; nor is it possible to follow them through their subsequent career of blasted hope and baffled enterprise, without having our admiration incessantly elicited by their defiance of danger, their persevering struggles against difficulties and almost impossibilities, and their manly, unshrinking fortitude, under hardships of every kind.

If at times our feelings revolt at the outrages committed by them upon the poor Indians, and by their wrongs towards those native chieftains who fought and fell so heroically in the defence of their homes; yet, our indignation passes away and is forgotten in the melancholy fate of the invaders. Scarce three years had elapsed from the time of their embarkation at Cuba, when nearly the whole train of youthful cavaliers had passed away: horse and rider alike had perished, and their bones lay bleaching amidst the savage wilds of America!

APPENDIX.

As the principal authority cited in the foregoing work is Garcilaso de la Vega, a few particulars concerning him and his writings may be acceptable to the reader. He was a Peruvian by birth, a native of the city of Cuzco. His father was a Spanish adventurer of noble descent, and his mother the sister of Huayna Capac, the last of the renowned Incas. Hearing much in his youth of the land of his father, he left his country and repaired to Spain, where he took up his residence at Cordova, and soon distinguished himself by his translation of the dialogues of love of Leon Hebreos, and by his royal commentaries on the History of the Incas. These won him the favor of the sovereigns and the esteem of the learned. Don Gabriel Deza de Cardenas, in his preface to the second edition of Garcilaso's History of Florida, remarks, that he was admired by the world as a man of piety, virtue, modesty, and devotion to letters, and held in the highest estimation as a historian. He died in Cordova, in 1616, and was honorably interred in the Cathedral, in one of the chapels, called the chapel of Garcilaso; where monumental inscriptions on each side of the altar record his valor, his virtues, and his literary merits.

Such is the general character of Garcilaso de la Vega; which will enable the reader in some measure to judge of his credibility as a historian. In his introduction to his work on Florida, he gives an account of the sources from whence he drew his facts. He says that he had frequently, and in divers places, held long conversations with an old friend, who had been present in the expedition of Hernando de Soto; and that, struck with the achievements both of the Spaniards and

Indians, related by this cavalier, he determined to rescue such heroic deeds from oblivion, by recording them in history. His laudable resolve was, for a time, however, postponed. He was called to lay down the pen and take up the sword; other causes concurred to separate them, and thus twenty years elapsed before he could carry his plan into execution.

The desire, however, of perpetuating this heroic expedition, and the names of the brave men concerned in it, increased with his years; and, fearing that the death either of his friend or of himself, might defeat his wishes, he left his home and took up his residence for a time in the village where the cavalier resided. Here he took down the particulars of the expedition, as related by word of mouth, questioning and requestioning his friend minutely and repeatedly, as to persons, and places, and transactions; thus stimulating his memory, and drawing piecemeal from it those anecdotes of individual prowess and adventure which give such stirring interest and vivacity to his narrative.

He does not give the name of his friend, but says he was a brave soldier, who had been present in all the scenes of the expedition, and had many times acted as leader, in the exploits he related. He adds that he was of noble rank, a hidalgo, and as such, piqued himself on uttering nothing but the truth. Such confidence was placed in his veracity, that the council royal of the Indies frequently sent for him to consult him about the events that chanced in this and in other expeditions in which he had been engaged.

Besides the oral testimony of this cavalier, the Inca informs us that he had likewise written documents from two other soldiers who were engaged in the expedition. One of them, named Alonzo de Carmona, a native of the town of Priego, having returned to Spain, wrote his "Two Peregrinations," as he called them, in Florida and Peru. They contained brief notices of facts and circumstances, skipping from one remarkable transaction to another, without much regard to dates or places, or the regular succession of events. These memoirs he sent to Garcilaso de la Vega, for his inspection; not knowing at the time that he was occupied on a history of the expedition.

The other soldier was Juan Coles, a native of Zafra; who likewise wrote an irregular and brief notice of the principal events of the expedition. This he gave to a Franciscan monk, named Fray Pedro Aguado; who incorporated it in a collection of narratives relative to the new world

which he intended to publish. The manuscripts of the friar, however remained in a crude and neglected state, in the hands of a printer in Cordova; where the Inca found them, covered with dust and half-destroyed by rats. There was nearly a ream of paper, divided into quires, in the handwriting of the different narrators. From among these the Inca extracted the manuscript of Juan Coles, shortly after he had received that of Alonzo de Carmona. At the time that these documents fell into his hands, he had already completed his narrative, as taken from the lips of his friend; but, having now two additional eye-witnesses, he went over the whole subject anew, availing himself of the particulars thus unexpectedly furnished him, to corroborate, strengthen, and enlarge the details already recorded.

Such are the sources from whence Garcilaso de la Vega derived his facts, and for which we have the guarantee of his general character as a man of judgment and veracity. His account of the expedition of Hernando de Soto was held in such credit in former times, and by those most capable of judging, that it was incorporated almost at full length, by Herrera, the great Spanish historian, in his history of American discovery.

ROUTE OF HERNANDO DE SOTO.

To assist any future research as to the route of Hernando de Soto and his followers, we here subjoin the various marchings, the distances and points of the compass, as gleaned from different parts of the Spanish and Portuguese narratives. They will be seen to be contradictory and exaggerated, and have frequently caused us great perplexity. We have endeavored to guide ourselves through the maze they present, by certain general landmarks, and by the researches of various travellers.

Indeed, the Inca himself remarks, "I cannot hold myself responsible for the accuracy of the distances I give, for, although I have spared no exertion, and have used all diligence to arrive at the truth, yet I have been unavoidably compelled to leave much to conjecture. The Spaniards had no instruments with them by which they could compute distances; their main object was to conquer the country, and seek for sil-

ver and gold; consequently, they gave themselves little trouble to note down the route."

De Soto and his followers, says the Inca, landed at the bay of Espiritu Santo, whence they marched a little more than two leagues in a north-east direction, and halted at the village of Hirrihigua: resuming their march to the north-east, a journey of twenty-five leagues brought them to the village of Urribarracuxi. Hence to the province of Acuera, where they next arrived, was twenty leagues. Departing from Acuera, and marching towards the north, and sometimes to the north-east, about twenty leagues, they came to the town of Ocali; here they crossed the river Ocali, and, journeying sixteen leagues, reached Ochile; a frontier village of the province of Vitachuco. The Spaniards, says the Inca, marched more than fifty leagues through this province. We next find them in the village of Vitachuco: setting out from thence, they marched four leagues, to the river of Osachile; crossing this, they continued on six leagues, and came to the village of Osachile. Twelve leagues further they found the great swamp: traversing this, which was one league and a half across, they continued on six leagues, and were arrested by a deep stream:—having crossed this, they marched four leagues, to the chief village of Apalachee, where they went into winter quarters. The Inca states here, that the bay of Ante was about four leagues distant.

Leaving Apalachee, the ensuing spring, they marched to the northward five days, and came to the province of Atapaha: ten days more brought them to the province of Achalaque.* They were five days in traversing this province, and in four days more, came to the frontier village of the province of Cofa. Leaving this village, in six or seven days they came to the province of Cofaqui: from thence, a march of seven days brought them to a river; marching up this for twelve leagues, they came to a frontier village of the province of Cofachiqui; in four days more they arrived at Cofachiqui. Quitting this province, they came, at the end of eight days, to the province of Chalaque. Three days more brought them to the province of Xuala.

The Inca here observes, that the Spaniards were fifty-seven days

* It will be seen, by referring to chap. xl. of our work, that we consider the Inca under a mistake in bringing them so soon to this province. We prefer the Portuguese account, which makes their arrival a month later.

marching from Apalachee to Xuala. He supposes that they must have marched about four leagues and a half a day; and that, consequently, Xuala must have been nearly two hundred and fifty leagues from the province of Apalachee, and about four hundred from the bay of Espiritu Santo.

They now struck, he says, in a westwardly direction, making a bend to the south; and in five days came to the province of Guaxule. A march of six days more, or thirty leagues, brought them to Ychiaha: their next journey was to the village of Acoste, five leagues from Ychiaha. Leaving this, they traversed the province of Cosa, and in twenty-three or four days came to the village of Cosa, which was more than a hundred leagues distant from Acoste. Continuing onward towards the south, five days' march brought them to the town of Talise; a journey of five or six days more found them in Tascaluza, and marching two leagues further, they halted in the town of Mauvila. From thence, De Soto, to avoid the sea, struck northwardly, and, marching seven days, came to the village of Chicaza. A league distant from this village was Chicacilla, where they passed the winter.

Setting out the following spring, the first place they arrived at was Alibamo, four or five leagues from Chicacilla; a march of three days brought them to the village of Chisca, on the banks of the Mississippi. Following up along the banks of this river four days, they crossed it, and marching four or five days longer, they came to the village of Casquin. A journey of six days brought them to Capaha: from thence the army returned to the village of Casquin. Leaving that town behind them, they continued down along the river nine days, when they reached the village of Quiguate. Still following the course of the river, in five days they came to Colima. The next province they reached was Tula, ten days' journey form the last; a march of six days more brought them to the town of Utiangue, where they wintered.

In the spring, the army resumed its wanderings, and in seven days came to the village of Naguatex. A march of five days brought them to the frontiers of the province of Guancane, which they were eight days in traversing. From thence they struck in a south-eastwardly direction, to reach the Mississippi. They traversed seven provinces, a distance, the Inca conjectures, of about one hundred and twenty leagues, and arrived at the province of Anilco. Marching through this province for thirty leagues, they came to the village of Anilco—a journey of four days

further, brought them to the province of Guachoya, where De Soto died.

The army, he says, set out for the westward, under Luis de Moscoso, and marching more than a hundred leagues, came to the province of Auche. Continuing on for six or seven days, they arrived at the province of los Vaqueros: they penetrated more than thirty leagues into this province, when their westward march was arrested by the sight of lofty mountains. From hence they set out on their return to the Mississippi, and making a bend to the southward, arrived at the village of Aminoya, three months from the time of their departure from Guachoya. The whole distance of their march to the west of the Mississippi, going and returning, he computes to have been more than three hundred and fifty leagues.

Garcilaso de la Vega remarks, that it is difficult to give precisely the length of the voyage of the Spaniards down the Mississippi, as they were so engaged in fighting that they had not time to calculate the probable distance; but he adds, that some time afterwards, in Mexico, they consulted among themselves, in the presence of some men skilled in maritime matters; and it was computed, that having had the aid of sails and oars, the average of a day and a night must have been about five and twenty leagues: and as they were nineteen days and nights in performing the voyage, the whole distance was not far short of five hundred leagues. According to the memorandum of Juan Coles, he says, it was considered seven hundred leagues. Garcilaso adds that the Mississippi at Aminoya, was nineteen fathoms deep, and a quarter of a league wide; and that some persons, who pretended to a knowledge of cosmography, asserted, that from this place, where the Spaniards embarked, to where the river takes its rise, was three hundred leagues, and some aver much more: but I adopt, says he, the opinion most within bounds, which would make this river eight hundred leagues in extent, which was the distance the Spaniards penetrated into the country.

Having given a sketch of the route as stated by the Inca in his Narrative, we annex a memorandum of the route according to the Portuguese Narrator.

From the port of the Holy Ghost (Espiritu Santo), he says, the army marched round the bay about two leagues, and came to the town

of Ucita: from thence they went thirty leagues to the province of Paracoxi: marching on, through the small villages Acela and Jocaste, they came to Cale; leaving Cale, they passed through Itara and Potano, and on the third day came to Utimama. They next came to a habitation, which he says the Spaniards called de Mala Paz, and from thence went to Cholupaba. Here they crossed a river, and having marched two days, arrived at Caliquen; five days' march brought them to Napetaca: continuing on by Pelaya, they next reached Uzachil—in two days' march they came to Axille. Having crossed a river, they halted in Vitachuco, a village of the province of Palache. Passing through the town of Uzelu, they came to Anhayca of Palache, where they went into winter quarters. He says the sea was only ten leagues distance from this place.

On the third of March they left Anhayca of Palache, and came to Copachiqui on the eleventh; continuing on, they arrived at Toalli on the twenty-first of the same month. Leaving Toalli the twenty-third, they crossed a river and came to Achese. Resuming their journey on the first of April, they were at Altaraca on the fourth, and arrived at Ocute on the tenth: they parted form Ocute on the twelfth, and passing through Cafaqui, they came to Patofa. The narrator here observes, that it is fifty leagues from Ocute to Patofa, and not less than three hundred and sixty leagues from Ocute to Espiritu Santo.

Leaving Patofa, they marched nine days, at the rate of seven or eight leagues a day, crossing two large rivers, and encamped in a desert. From hence they marched about twelve or thirteen leagues, and came to a small village called Aymay—they next arrived at the province of Cutifachiqui, two days' journey distant from Aymay. Departing from Cutifachiqui, they marched a hundred leagues in this province, and came to Chalaque—a journey of five days more brought them to the province of Xualla. The narrator observes here, that from Ocute to Cutifachiqui, it is reckoned a hundred and thirty leagues, and from Cutifachiqui to Xualla, two hundred and fifty. Leaving Xualla, they came in five days to Quaxule—two days' march brought them to Canasaqua: they journeyed on five days, and came to Chiaha. The next town they reached was Acoste, seven days' journey distant. On the ninth of July the army left Acoste, and went to Tali; and thence to Cosa, where they arrived on the fifteenth. They parted from Cosa on the twentieth, and passing through Tallimuchase, Ulliballi, and Toasi, arrived at Tallise on

the eighteenth of September. The narrator remarks in this place, that they usually marched five or six leagues a day in countries that were inhabited; but in the wilderness they journeyed as far as possible, lest they should be straitened for want of provisions. He says, that it is computed that Tascaluza is twenty leagues south of Cosa—Cosa one hundred and eighty leagues west of Xualla—Xualla two hundred and fifty leagues north of Cutifachiqui—Cutifachiqui four hundred and thirty leagues north-east of Palache—and Palache one hundred west from Espiritu Santo.—Leaving Tallise, the Spaniards passed through Casiste, and came to the town of Piache; here they crossed a wide river, and continuing on, arrived at Maville the eighteenth of October. They departed from Maville the eighteenth of November, and in five days entered the province of Pafallaya: they passed through the villages of Taliepatave and Cabusto, and crossing a wide river, arrived at Chicasa, on the eighteenth of December. Here they went into winter quarters.

Resuming their march in the spring, they came to the village of Alimamu—hence they journeyed seven days, and arrived at Quizquiz: a march of half a league brought them to the Mississippi. From Tascaluza to the great river, observes the narrator, we reckon three hundred leagues.

Crossing this river, they marched a league and a half, to a village in the province of Aquixo; continuing on, they came to the village of Casqui—they next reached the village of Pacaha, about a day's journey distant from Casqui. Returning to the latter place, they continued their march, and arrived at Quigate, which was one hundred and twenty leagues from Pacaha.

Leaving Quigate, they marched about forty leagues to the province of Coligoa. Five days more brought them to Palisema: they next came to Tafalicoya. Four days' journey distant was the province of Cayas, which they entered, and halted in the town of Tanico. After a march of three days they came to Tulla: they next arrived, at the end of five days, at Quipana. Continuing onward, they passed through Anoixi and Catamaya, and arrived at Autiamque, where they passed the winter.

Setting out from Autiamque on the sixth of March, they passed through the province of Ayays, and came to the town of Tultelpina. After three days' march, they arrived at Tianto; and the next day, the fifteenth of March, they came to Nilco. Soon after, they came to

Guachoya, where De Soto dies. Luis de Moscoso set out on the fifth of June, and passing through the province of Catalte arrived at Chaguate on the twentieth. Three days' journey from thence brought them to the province of Aguacay. They continued on, and passing by Pato, on the fourth day came to the province of Maye:—they next reached Naguatex. At the end of three days' march, they came to the small hamlet of Missobone: thence they passed through Lacane, Mondacao, and the province of Aays, and arrived at Socatino. After twenty days' march, they came to the province of Guasco. They continued on to the river Daycao, ten days' journey from Guasco, where they arrived in the beginning of October. The narrator says here, that from Daycao to the great river it was one hundred and fifty leagues, which they had travelled, marching always to the westward.

From hence they set out on their return, and passing through Naguatex, Chaguete, and the town of Cilano, arrived at Nilco in the beginning of December: from thence they went two days' journey to Minoya. Here they embarked upon the Mississippi. Their course, he says, continued seventeen days, in which time they made two hundred and fifty leagues.

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